

CHAPLAIN'S BULLETIN MAY 22, 2022



Dear Folks,

Jesus says, “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him (John 14:23).” Take a moment and soak in that thought: God making His dwelling with us in permanent, personal union. Ahhh. That is abundant life (John 10:10), true freedom (John 8:31-32), and the fullness of Joy (John 15:11, 16:20-22). Let’s take a look at what that means for us.

When the Book of Revelation describes the New Jerusalem, an image of heaven, we are told “I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb (Rev 21:22).” We remember there was no temple described in the Garden of Eden. Yes, God is present everywhere, but He touches us uniquely in the liturgy. God call us to places of worship, and we must be intentional about participating in the liturgy because of our limited, sinful perspective, but in heaven it will not be necessary, and the heavenly liturgy will be everything. Fish in the ocean do not travel in search of water. Now we take sips of what will then be an ocean. Now we are distracted by lesser things, less open to receiving Him, and hold back from giving ourselves completely to Him. Jesus teaches us and enables us by grace to give ourselves to Him ever more perfectly. The journey of discipleship is essentially growing in our ability to receive Him and give ourselves to Him. This includes the call to worship, most especially in the Eucharistic liturgy.

We are called to be disciples, and that means we are about knowing Jesus better and sharing Jesus better. This is the way to the fullness of life, the abundant life, and the fullness of joy. That is the essence of what Church is about.

The essence of the Gospel is the Gift of Self. Our Lord, in His Pascal Mystery, gave Himself as the perfect gift for our salvation. He offered one sacrifice, once for all, that we might be wedded to Him forever. There is a paradox: The Bible says we are to offer sacrifice to the Lord (Romans 12:1; Colossians 1:24; 1Peter 2:4-5; Ephesians 5:1-2). But there is only one sacrifice, therefore we are to offer that one, suffered once in time, eternally before the Father). In the heavenly liturgy in Revelation 5, we see Jesus as “the Lamb who was slain.” He enables us to give ourselves as gift to Him. More on that next time.

Participating in the Eucharistic liturgy is not simply one activity among many for Christians, but the “source and summit of life.” It is our most intimate encounter with the Lord this side of heaven, and it gives form and meaning to all other aspects of our lives.

When a couple gets married, they give themselves to each other sacramentally in their vows. Then, when they go out and live their married lives, they give themselves to each other in practice, fulfilling their vows. Their vows would mean less than nothing if they did not intend to live them out in practice, and what they do for each other in practice is given shape and meaning by their vows. Each is essential for each other. Jesus gave Himself sacramentally in the Last Supper, and then in practice by dying on the cross. Without the Last Supper, the cross was just an execution, and without the cross, the Last Supper was just dinner. At Mass, Jesus and we give ourselves to each other sacramentally, then as we go out and live the Christian life, we encounter Him and give ourselves in practice. If you ask which one is more important praying the Mass or living the Christian life, I will ask you which is more important: inhaling or exhaling.

Therefore, coming to Mass is just the beginning. Praying it well is important beyond my powers to describe. How do we pray the Mass well? That, folks, is for next week.

Blessings,
Fr Jim