



Dear Folks,

At the priests' conference, we talked about the Eucharistic revival. Our speaker was a theology professor, Dr. Timothy O'Malley. We reviewed the statistics about the (vast) majority of Catholics who believe that at Mass the bread and wine are only symbols of the Body and Blood of Christ, rather than being truly, substantially the Body and Blood of Christ. As horrible as that is, we cannot solve the problem simply by telling them the correct doctrine, but people need to know why this matters, what difference it makes in their lives. Furthermore, they must not only know it cognitively, but personally, deep down to their core. There is a gap between faith and life, and people don't see that it matters that much.

Nor need we think only of those already beatified and canonized. The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God's holy and faithful people, for "it has pleased God to make men and women holy and to save them, not as individuals without any bond between them, but rather as a people who might acknowledge him in truth and serve him in holiness". In salvation history, the Lord saved one people. We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual. Rather, God draws us to himself, taking into account the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in a human community. God wanted to enter into the life and history of a people (Gaudete et Exultate 6)."

We are so busy and moving so fast that life is a series of events, and we don't step back to see the larger narrative, the meaning. People have been taught that the good life is being very productive. Relationships, contemplation and meaning get pushed aside by an ever increasing torrent of tasks. People are falling apart, and there are not nearly enough counselors to help people who need counseling.

People see the reality as primarily something to manipulate rather than resonating with it. Consider, for a moment, resonating with someone or something. Rather than coming to a reality with preset preferences and trying to see how much we can push things in that direction, we are sensitive to the movement and quick to adapt. Think of two people dancing together, their movements seek to be synchronized so that they flow together. This is a powerful experience and helps draw us out of ourselves. One of the major challenges of our time is to get more Catholics to see themselves less as customers in the Church, and more as disciples and co-workers in mission. More on that later.

As we talk about becoming a Eucharistic people, we start with looking more deeply at the meaning of baptismal priesthood. I trust everyone was taught that at our baptism we were anointed "priest, prophet, and king," but we most were not taught much about what that means, much less what it means in practice. That is for next week.

Blessings, Fr. Jim