

Chaplain's Bulletin June 2, 2024



Dear Folks,

Today is the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. When we talk about the hope that the Catholic Church in America flourishes in the future, how much we flourish will revolve around how we respond to the Eucharist. The Second Vatican council has given us some principles:

1. We are called to understand: Jesus is uniquely present, and makes present His one sacrifice on the cross (which happened once in history, but whose power is eternal, see Revelation 5). We are called to participate and be incorporated into that sacrifice, that we can become an offering to God.
2. We are called to participate internally: The faithful are called to offer the Divine Victim not only through the priest, but together with him, and in so doing offer our own lives. We offer our work, our struggles, our suffering, our joys and sorrows, all the aspects of our walking with God through the week.
3. We are called to participate externally: This expresses and strengthens our internal participation and encourages those around us to participate more fully (we are responsible for supporting each other). We are called to sing or say the words and do the actions that the liturgy gives us to do and do it like we mean it. There is no need to add a bunch of other things that the liturgy does not call us to do; we can focus on doing our part with all our minds and all our hearts. That will be challenge enough.
4. We are called to live out the meaning of what we celebrate in the rest of our lives that week. Think of how a bride and groom give themselves to each other in their marriage vows at their wedding and give themselves to each other is living out those vows in their lives. The sacrament and the living out the sacrament form one act of selfgiving and each gives meaning and strength to the other.

Having someone who cares for us personally is unlike anything else in reality. I hear people are developing robots with artificial intelligence and the ability to mimic human expressions. They can be programmed to tell us how much they love us and how wonderful we are. Someone might fool themselves for a while with such a toy, but ultimately it is empty. What matters is encountering someone who truly loves us. No one loves us more than the Lord, and this most intimate encounter in the Eucharist is more precious than anything the earth can offer. Many people leave the Church or stop coming to Mass because they forget this or never were taught in the first place. If we realized what a great gift it is, how could we leave? What on earth could make us stop coming?

As I have said before, if we want a better church, if we want a better world, the first step is to fall more deeply in love with Jesus. One thing we can all do is ask: do I respond to the call to the Eucharist like I really believe in it?

Blessings,

Fr. Jim