

But Nobody Ever Told Me... XXXVII

Tradition is surprisingly fragile. Once a link of the chain is broken, it is extremely difficult to reattach—and if it effects a second link—almost impossible. What often happens in many disciplines is that an older generation assumes that the younger generation knows how and why certain things are done. We can see this in everything from sports practices to cooking recipes.

Today we close out our observance of this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, and accordingly, this series. What effective and sustainable resolutions can we make so that we continue to avail ourselves of the Mercy of for the rest of our lives? The basic building blocks of a mature person are the ability to say “I’m sorry” and “thank you”. God has given us *Sacraments* to be able to do the same with Him.

Last week we discussed the power of authentic gratitude. We also mentioned that in the Latin-based languages, the word for “thank you” has an implied connection to the divine—words meaning “mercy” or “grace”—and in Jesus’ mind, the expression of gratitude is related to Faith. (see Lk 17:12-19)

The English transliteration of the Greek word for ‘thanksgiving’ is *eucharistia*. Look familiar? This explains a lot about the Eucharist.

Jesus Christ is present Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Eucharist. This is the perennial teaching of the Church. However, there is more to the Eucharist than merely what God does, and it makes an enormous difference in the fruitfulness (effect) of this sacrament *in us*.

There is a reason why we take up the collection when we do. At the same time the host elements (bread and wine) that will be used for Consecration at that Mass are also presented and placed on the Altar.

The idea is that we (the community) are presenting to the Lord (via the hands of the Deacon and Priest) the fruit of our lives. Symbolized by the bread and wine are our victories and defeats, successes and failures, merits and sins, works and deficiencies, sufferings and healings, all those whom we love and hold in our hearts, all those whom we have encountered, and our very lives over the past week since we were last present at Mass.

This is symbolized by the offering (collection), but for it to be real and complete, we need to think of all of those things and imagine handing them over to be placed on the Altar. If we do not do this, Jesus cannot bless those things in our lives the way He wants to. He can always give us Himself, but even God cannot give what He does not have. He wants to bless, strengthen and heal us and gave us the Eucharist for this purpose. It is not His fault if we do not avail ourselves of it.

Next week: *Transition...*

*Fr. Michael*