

Corpus Christi A 2017 SML
JN 6:51-58

Two banquets were held in Galilee in the course of a year:

- ✓ One, at the wedding feast in Cana, where Our Blessed Lord was a guest;
- ✓ the other, in the open air, where Our Blessed Lord was the host;

- ✓ At one, there was wine to overflowing
- ✓ At the other, there was enough bread to feed 5000 men

- ✓ At one, His disciples came to believe in Him
- ✓ At the other, many of His disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied Him.

- ✓ At one, directions were given without explanation: "Fill the jars with water. Draw some out and take it to the headwaiter."
- ✓ At the other, directions were given, "Have the people recline. Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted," but with these directions came considerable explanation.

Now explanation is quite common in the Gospel of John:

- Last Sunday's gospel was part of the discourse between Our Blessed Lord and Nicodemus. When Jesus spoke to Master Nicodemus about being "born again," Nicodemus asked, "How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother's womb and be born again, can he?" Jesus, then, explained Baptism.

- When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan Woman about living water, the woman asked, “Where is this water so I won’t have to keep coming back to this well?” Jesus, then, explained living water.
- In this evening's (morning's) gospel, when the Jews quarreled about eating his flesh, Our Blessed Lord masterfully explained His real presence in the Eucharist.
 - ✓ Twelve times Jesus said he was the bread that came down from heaven.
 - ✓ Four times he said we must “eat his flesh and drink his blood.”
 - ✓ Jesus said, “My flesh IS real food, my blood IS real drink. At the Last Supper, Jesus said, "This IS my body. This IS my blood.” And the verb in the language that Jesus spoke, namely Aramaic, means “Is,” it does not mean represents, nor signifies, nor symbolizes. When Jesus said, "This IS my body. This IS my blood," that is literally what He meant.

While I am clarifying Jesus' language, I would also like speak for a moment on the phrase, "Do this in memory of me." "Do this in memory of me" is a very poor English translation of what Jesus said in Aramaic. To translate it more accurately because awkward in English, but I'll do the best I can. When Jesus said, "Do this in memory of me," Our Blessed Lord not

only set up a memorial for his death on the cross, that is – when you repeat this, when you replicate what I am doing, you will be remembering my death. You will also (and here is the literal translation) "make me come alive again." So you will not only be remembering me, but you will also be making me alive again." Right there on the altar, at the consecration, Jesus is made alive again. And we hear that right in the Eucharistic prayer right after the consecration;

“ . . . we offer you this holy and living sacrifice”

What was put into place by Our Blessed Lord, namely the Eucharist, Christ alive and present before us right here in the Church, for those receiving Holy Communion, Christ alive in your hand, Christ alive in your heart – first of all, it's miraculous, it is omnipotent, it is all powerful, it is awesome. God in the Church! God in your hand! God in your heart! It doesn't get any better than that.

As stated in the June 19th issue of Time Magazine, while Pope Francis is a pastor for the people, his predecessor, Pope Benedict is a scholar. Probably the finest quality of the Pope is his clarity. He teaches the objective truth clearly.

Hand in hand with his being a teacher, Pope Benedict is also a liturgist. By that, I mean Benedict understands the Mass. He

understands its origin, which is everything I explained above; he understands where the Mass has been; he understands where the Mass is; and he understands where the Mass needs to go . . .

From the writings of Pope Benedict XVI:

"I am convinced that the crisis in the Church"

the crisis being that only 30 percent of Catholics attend Mass regularly; and less than 30 percent attend Mass weekly; the vocation crisis; that is the crisis. . .

"I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is to a large extent due to the disintegration of the Mass, which at times has even come to be conceived as that it matters little to God (*etsi Deus non daretur*) "

What Benedict is referring to is that poor 70's theology, and we all remember it, "that God doesn't care if you come to Mass; that God doesn't care how you come to Church; that God doesn't care if you participate in the Mass; that God doesn't care if you are reverent before, during or after receiving Holy Communion, that God doesn't care, that God doesn't care . . .

"But when the community of faith, the world-wide unity of the Church and her history, and the mystery of the living Christ are no longer visible in the Mass, where else, then, is the Church to become visible in her spiritual essence? Then the community is celebrating only itself . . .

Brilliant! Benedict is saying that if God doesn't care, if you take God out of the equation, then what's left? Us. The Mass then becomes all about us. The Mass then becomes a matter of whether or not we get anything out of the Mass, as if that's all that is important.

Then the community is celebrating only itself, an activity that is utterly fruitless. And, because the Church cannot have its origin from itself but emerges as a unity only from the Lord, through faith, the Church, celebrating only itself will inexorably result in a disintegration . . . (into sectarian parties of all kinds) . . . partisan opposition within a Church tearing herself apart. This is why we need a new Liturgical Movement, which will call to life the real heritage of the Second Vatican Council.

Brilliant again! Benedict is saying that that poor 70's theology (that God doesn't care if we come to Mass, how we come to Mass, and how often we come to Mass) was never intended by Vatican II.

What our Holy Father is saying is that poor 70's theology has resulted in a crisis in the Church. And in my humble opinion, he is right on the mark.

It's Father's Day. So I'd like to quote from a study documented by Robbie Low (not Rob Lowe) in "The Truth About Men & Church" on the Importance of Fathers to

Churchgoing. Low quotes some staggering statistics, but here's the bottom line:

In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.

I'll be quick to hold up my Dad as an example. For years as young boy, before my Dad converted to Catholicism, my Dad worked on Sundays. Without fail, he got up early every Sunday and attended the first Mass before he went to work. I never remember my Dad at Church without a shirt and tie, and his shoes shined. In fact, there's more than a few parishioners who tease me because my shoes are shined. And I'll also be quick to add my Dad was as exemplary a follower of Jesus on the inside as he was on the outside. And I'll also say my Dad is four for four in his children going to Church.

Some people come to Church like they go to K Mart because they were fed, and they believed that poor 70's theology that God doesn't really care.

But Our Holy Father says, "Oh, no. God does care, and so should we."