



Relationship with GOD

More than Just SUNDAY

A little boy asks an important question

Recently I remained in my pew after Sunday Mass for some time of reflection. Within minutes, a rambunctious little boy with special needs ran down the center aisle. I am sure that the long open space was very inviting to him. He then went up some side stairs and through the sanctuary and back down the main steps. His older brother was trying to catch up in order to stop him. The older brother finally caught him at the bottom of the stairs. This had all happened very quietly and I had not noticed the situation until this point. The older brother said to his young brother, “You can’t run up there. The sanctuary is a holy place.” And the little boy asked an important question. “Why?”

I immediately began thinking about how I would answer the little boy’s question. My first response would have been to point at the tabernacle and explain that Jesus is truly present there. The red sanctuary candle, which is always nearby, reminds us of this fact. This would suffice for the little boy at this point, with the idea of always adding more as he matures.

For an adult, my response would include more explanation about the tabernacle and the Holy Eucharist. The tabernacle is the beautiful receptacle in the Church

in which the Holy Eucharist is reserved. The Holy Eucharist is Jesus Himself. This is the reason why we genuflect, reverently going down on our right knee to the floor (or bowing our head if we cannot genuflect) as we enter and depart our pew in a Catholic Church.

Jesus desires to remain with us always. How does this happen, that Jesus becomes truly present at the hands of an ordained Catholic priest? During Holy Mass, the priest, standing in the Person of Jesus, repeats the words of Christ from the Last Supper. As the priest takes the bread, he says, “Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is My Body, which will be given up for you.” And then the priest takes the chalice and says, “Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of My Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal Covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of Me.” (See the Last Supper narrative in these three Gospels: Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14: 22-24; Luke 22: 14-20) After the priest prays these words of consecration, the host still looks like bread and the wine still tastes like wine, but the bread and wine have become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

And don’t we need to be exceedingly astonished at this incredible miracle? Of course, the other amazing thing is that Jesus allows us to receive Him in Holy Communion. We want to be nourished and grow in our awareness of the astounding love that Jesus has for each one of us, in that He gives Himself totally to us, literally dwelling in our hearts.

Why is this so important? Every one of us deals with worries, distress, fear and difficulties that life brings each day. These things weigh us down. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you. My own peace I give to you: a peace the world cannot give, this is My gift to you. Let not your hearts be troubled or afraid.” (John 14:27) Jesus wants us to come to Him, laying before Him our problems, and putting ourselves into His care. Attending Mass and receiving Jesus in Holy Communion is the most privileged place to encounter Jesus. It is here that we most abundantly receive the peace that Jesus wants to give us if we open our hearts to Him.

During this holy season of Lent, consider this: in addition to Sunday, you might resolve to go to Mass at least once during the week. This will afford you the opportunity to become more attuned to Jesus’ True Presence in the Holy Eucharist.

Let us slow down a bit—like the boy at the end of his run – and allow for more precious moments of silence during Lent, to be with Jesus. He is the only One who can bring us true peace and ultimately satisfy our restless hearts.

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