

LIVING EUCHARIST INITIATIVE

“Common Threads” Homily Helps & Intercessions

October 2009

October 4, 2009 – 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Genesis 2:18-24 – *The two of them become one flesh.*

Hebrews 2:9-11 – *The one who consecrates and those who are being consecrated all have one origin.*

Mark 10:2-16 – *Therefore what God has joined together, let no human being separate.*

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – HOMILY

The first reading gives us a clear understanding of God’s will from the beginning of time: we are not created to be alone. We are created to be in relationship, we only blossom and grow to our full potential through the gift of relationships. Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta said that the worst disease in the world was loneliness. She had been in many homes across the world, especially in the undeveloped nations, and discovered many people dying alone and unloved.

The Eucharist visibly celebrates that we are created for each other. It draws together, like nothing else on earth, people of every race, language and way of life to share in the one eternal banquet. As we gather around the Lord’s Table we recognize that we are very different, all unique, but one in the image and likeness of God. We need each other. We do not journey alone to the Kingdom of eternal life, we make the journey together. When we come to Mass we do not do our own thing, or just say our own personal prayers, we pray with one voice and act in unison. The Mass is a symphony of unity.

Today’s first reading and gospel focus on the gift of marriage. The Eucharist is called the marriage feast of the Lamb. At Mass, Christ binds himself to us for better, for worse, for richer, for poor, in sickness, in health and for all eternity. His love is freely given. Love can never be forced. The Gospel acknowledges the reality of divorce. Relationships do fail. As a Eucharistic community we must always be willing to heal, to restore, to challenge and forgive. We can give up on each other too quickly. Christ invites us to go to extreme lengths in order to reconcile, to do everything we possibly can to heal our differences and restore friendship. The Eucharist gives us the power, the strength and the resolve to do so.

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – INTERCESSIONS

That the Eucharist will continue to draw us closer together as a community of faith, enabling us to heal, restore and forgive broken relationships. We pray to the Lord.

That by participating in the diocesan *Living Eucharist* Initiative may we celebrate the richness of our diversity and deepen our unity as children of the one God. We pray to the Lord.

October 11, 2009 – 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Wisdom 7:7-11 – *I deemed riches nothing in comparison to wisdom.*

Hebrews 4:12-13 – *The word of God discerns reflections and thoughts of the heart.*

Mark 10:17-30 – *Sell what you have, and follow me.*

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – HOMILY

The economic downturn, financial crisis, the loss of countless jobs, and the great number of house foreclosures has turned our lives upside down during the past year. Many people who had wealth and security have lost them. The poor and most vulnerable have lost the most. The young man in today’s gospel is asked to take the biggest risk and gamble of his life. To give all he has to the poor in order to be a disciple. Nobody has probably asked him to give up so much. However, he is not prepared to take this risk. He has neither the guts nor the trust nor the faith at this particular moment in his life to change his whole lifestyle.

Today’s economic crisis has forced many people to change their lifestyles, to rethink their priorities, to make some very significant changes. It is not easy. We get used to the way things are, we don’t like change at the best of times let alone when it is forced upon us. Jesus is not forcing the young man to give up all his wealth, but extending an invitation. He is testing his resolve. He is obviously a good man who knows and lives the commandments. Jesus wants to move his faith life onto a deeper level but the rich young man is afraid to do so, to let go of his wealth. Jesus has issued a very hard call!

The Eucharist reveals our fears and complacency in our relationship with Jesus. By coming into the presence of Jesus we will be challenged. We will be asked to make changes. We can turn a deaf ear to what Jesus asks. We can justify what we have and who we are. When Jesus’ words are proclaimed at Mass they make us feel uncomfortable. We may recognize that we do not put Christ before everyone and everything. The Eucharist keeps us on the road to conversion. It does not allow us to leave any stone unturned to the presence of Christ. Christ wants to move our faith relationship onto a deeper level. The Eucharist invites us to do so, are we ready to accept the invitation?

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – INTERCESSIONS

That through our participation in the diocesan *Living Eucharist* Initiative we will open ourselves to Jesus’ invitation to let go of whatever might hinder us and to come follow him. We pray to the Lord.

That through the Eucharist our relationship with Christ will be challenged, strengthened and renewed. We pray to the Lord.

October 18, 2009 – 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 53:10-11 – *If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendents in a long life.*

Hebrews 4:14-16 – *Let us confidently approach the throne of grace.*

Mark 10:35-45 – *The Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many.*

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – HOMILY

Whenever I come to the Eucharist, to Mass, I always have a list of things I want to talk to Christ about. There is the usual list of favors. There are also prayers of bargaining: you do this for me and I will do this for you! In our relationships we do expect to receive as well as to give, this is a natural (flawed) part of human nature. We expect something in return for what we give.

If this is how I think and behave then I am not surprised that the sons of Zebedee ask Jesus for a favor. The favor seems a bit extreme: to sit one at his right and one at his left in the kingdom of glory. But Jesus does not dismiss their request. They are unaware of the implications of what they are asking. There is room for everyone in the Kingdom of Heaven. We don't have to be concerned about seating arrangements. Jesus asks the brothers if they are willing to drink the cup that he is going to drink and to be baptized with the baptism he will be baptized with. They respond 'Yes' without hesitation. And so they will!

When the request is made their agenda and Christ's agenda don't really match up. "The boys" are interested in the glory of the kingdom; Jesus is all about service and sacrificing his life out of love for others. Their agendas will match only after the resurrection when both disciples become fearless witnesses to Christ and the truth of the gospel. The death and resurrection of Jesus will transform them.

At every Mass we are invited and encouraged to drink from the cup of salvation. As we approach the chalice at Mass we should hold in our hearts Jesus' words in today's gospel: "*Can you drink the cup that I drink?*" For every time we drink from the cup of salvation we commit ourselves to a sacrificial way of living and loving: our priority is service. It is this lifestyle which will lead us to the Kingdom of eternal life.

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – INTERCESSIONS

That our participation in the diocesan *Living Eucharist* Initiative will enlighten us about the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist, so that we may unite ourselves to and imitate Jesus' example of self-sacrificing love. We pray to the Lord.

That at every Eucharist we will commit ourselves to a life of sacrificial love: we pray to the Lord.

October 25, 2009 – 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 31:7-9 – *The blind and the lame I will bring back: I will console them.*

Hebrews 5:1-6 – *You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

Mark 10:46-52 – *Master, I want to see.*

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – HOMILY

Great joy and enthusiasm echoes from the first reading and the gospel for today’s Mass. We all have much to rejoice about. God continues to do great and glorious things in the world. The Mass is a celebration of thanksgiving; this is after all what Eucharist means. At every Mass we count our blessings. We thank God for all the graces and blessings we have received through our Savior Jesus Christ. At times it can be easier to remember what has gone wrong in our lives and to forget the many blessings and the graces we have received.

I have met many people who have had to face and embrace difficult, heart-breaking and life changing situations, who are still willing and able to give glory and praise to God. Recently a lady sat with me whose son had died in a tragic car accident. While she is still grief stricken and her heart broken, she was also able to tell me how God’s grace has been at work since the accident. How her eyes have been opened to God’s presence through the love and support of others. God is also now using her as a vehicle of grace for other parents who have lost a child. She is now a trained counselor and has established a house of mercy and encouragement.

God promises us through Jeremiah that he will console and guide us. This consolation and guidance often comes through others in unexpected ways. The blind man, Bartimaeus, would not keep silent. He cried out for Jesus, he needed his mercy. He cried out and his prayer was answered. His eyes were opened, but it was faith that saved him. Jesus never wants us to lose faith, in Him, ourselves or others. It is faith that keeps us alive and sustains us. Once we lose faith we lose hope. God does not want that to happen to anyone. The Eucharist keeps the flame of faith alive. It does not hide us from reality, but opens our eyes to the knowledge that nothing, nothing at all, can ever separate us from God’s love.

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – INTERCESSIONS

That our participation in the diocesan *Living Eucharist* Initiative will embolden us to faithfully call out to Jesus for mercy and that we lovingly extend this same mercy to others. We pray to the Lord.

That through the Eucharist we will recognize God’s graces and blessings in our lives: we pray to the Lord.