

Catechism of the Catholic Church-Pillars of Faith Series

Pillar 2: The Christian Mystery
Bishop Hying

1:50 St. Therese of Lisieux: “My Favorite Female Saint”

We'll just start with a little call-out to Saint Therese. Today, October 1, is the Feast Day of Saint Therese of Lisieux, who is my all-time, favorite female saint. And I just want to publicly give her honor -- because in so many ways, she has powerfully worked in my life and has really led me to know Jesus in a deeper way.

So we begin: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord God, we thank you for giving Saint Therese to the Church. For in her “little way,” we see our way -- our way of loving you in all the small details of our lives, and in giving our hearts to you in our ordinary, seemingly ordinary, activities. We ask her intercession that we, too, may be marked by a great love, by a great passion, by a great commitment to the Holy Gospel of Jesus. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

So, Saint Therese was born in 1873 in kind of an upper-class family. Her family had servants. Her mother died when she was four, which was a very traumatic thing for her, and she watched her sisters, to whom she was deeply attached, one-by-one go off to the local Carmelite Convent. And she could never see them again, because it was a cloistered monastery.

She's one of those saints that, from a very early age, was just drawn to an extraordinary love of God and a deep experience of Jesus. She was very strong-willed. She got into the convent as a sister at the age of 15, which was against all the rules. Somehow, she pulled that off. So, she's 15 years old. She's in the convent, and she's an example of getting what you want and then wondering if that's what you really wanted. So, she's this vivacious 15-year-old girl, and her days are filled with silence. She's with much older women -- a lot of prayer, a lot of work, and a lot of solitude.

And she begins to question her vocation. And she thinks, “Maybe I should be a missionary. Maybe I should be a martyr. Maybe God is calling me to do something really big.” And she prayed about it, and she read the Scriptures and she read [Chapters 12](#) (or <http://uscgb.org/bible/1corinthians/12>) and [13](#) (or <http://uscgb.org/bible/1corinthians/13>) of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians that talks about the different parts of the body and

how it is the love of God that makes all the parts of the body work together. And she realized, God wasn't calling her to do great things; He was calling her to little things -- little things, but with great love in her heart.

So for her, it meant smiling when you didn't want to smile. Being kind to the cranky old nun in the cell next to her. Putting up with all sorts of things that could be a whole lot better. But just taking the little details of her life and offering them up to God. So, she wrote her spiritual autobiography, and then, at the age of 24, contracted tuberculosis and goes into this very dark night. She struggles with whether she going to go to heaven. She struggles with "Did I throw my life away? Here I am, 24 years old, and I'm dying." She felt like the windows and doors of heaven were closed to her. And it was only right before she died that this darkness lifted. But she said that she would spend her heaven doing good on earth, that she wanted to travel the world after death and help people. So, she said, 'Pray to me.' She had this holy boldness. It's like, "I'm going to do my greatest work after I'm gone from this life."

And during World War I, her convent printed prayer cards to her and handed them out to French soldiers. And so, these soldiers are praying this prayer to this Sister Therese. And at the end of World War I, the convent is flooded with letters from soldiers claiming that they saw her in battle and that she protected them, that she saved their life, that she made miraculous intercession. It was so dramatic that she was canonized in 1925.

She dies in 1897, unknown outside the walls of her convent. And, she overheard two sisters talking while she lay dying who said, "What are we going to write about Therese when she dies; she hasn't done anything?" So, she's the saint of little people. Twenty-eight years later, she is known, canonized and loved throughout the world. I'd say she's the most popular female saint.

Whenever I go into a new church, I always play a game and ask Therese, "Where are you?" Because, usually there's an image, a statue, a picture of her. And there's so many times I've powerfully prayed to her, and she has miraculously intervened in my life. So, I just want to pay public tribute to her intercession and encourage you to pray to her, if you don't already. She does not disappoint, but she shows us you don't have to be somebody else and you don't have to be somewhere else in order to become the saint that God has called you to be. So we just call on her intercession and presence tonight.

7:42 The Catechism, its Origin and its Necessity for Every Catholic Home

So, thank you for the marathon session last week. I felt when I went home I was trying to cram the entire Encyclopedia Britannica into your minds in about, you know, one hour

and ten minutes. To talk about the entirety of the Creed in an hour and a half is just insane, actually, But, we went over the basic things, right?

This Catechism! In 1985 Saint John Paul II called together a group of bishops, and he had this brilliant idea that we need to formulate a new Catechism for the Universal Church. So, this is the first Catechism on a universal level since the Council of Trent in the 1500s, and it was published in 1994. It was nine years in the making, but it's filled with quotations from Scriptures, from the Saints, from the Church fathers. It's just a great composite of the faith, and someone kindly ordered hundreds of copies that are in the back. So, if you want to make a donation, you can take one home tonight. Every Catholic home should have this, because if you ever have a question about what the Church teaches about something, here it is. It's just a great, great little book. I also want to do a shout-out for the small faith group sessions that are beginning here at Saint Dennis. If you feel moved to sign up for one of those, there's sign-ups available in the back.

So last week, we talked about the mystery of God, about the person of Jesus Christ, about His mission, about His life, His ministry, His death, His resurrection, the meaning of our faith with Jesus Christ, crucified and risen at the center. We talked about the Holy Spirit. We talked about the Church. We talked about Original Sin, and that fall from grace and the beautiful truth that God has never given up on us, but continues throughout the Scriptures to establish the Covenant, to send prophets, to proclaim mercy, to give people another chance. Until finally, the ultimate chance is given to us in the person of Jesus, definitively, forever.

9:45 What are Sacraments?

So the second section of the Catechism is on the Sacraments, on the Liturgy. And we see for us, as Catholics, that the Sacraments are God's way of being with us, of saving us, of claiming us as his children, of coming to live within us. And conversely, the Sacraments are our way of worshipping God, of loving God, of growing in our relationship with God.

Some of you are probably old enough to remember the Baltimore Catechism definition of a Sacrament. Somebody want to shout that out? An outward sign instituted by Christ to confer grace. That was the tried-and-true Baltimore definition of Sacrament.

When we think of the Sacraments, we think fundamentally of the Paschal Mystery. So for us as Christians, it's the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that is at the center of everything. Because, it is in that Paschal Mystery, that dying and rising, that we are saved from our sins, that the kingdom of heaven is open to us, and that we enter into relationship with God.

Throughout Saint Paul's writings in the Epistles, he talks about the fact that, in Christ, we become adopted children of God. When we first hear that language of adoption, it may be a little off-putting. You know? What does that mean?

What it means is something absolutely astounding and beautiful. Because, what we believe as Christians is that, through the Sacraments, Christ fully shares with us His relationship with the Father.

11:35 Jesus: Most Prized Possession as the Son of the Father

When you think of reality from the point of view of Jesus Christ, would not His relationship with the Father be his most prized possession? It defines him as the Son. It is his uniqueness as the Son of the Father.

But God loves us so much that, through Jesus and through the mediation of the Sacraments, we are invited into that same relationship so that, who Jesus is by nature we become by adoption, starting in Baptism.

We can certainly say all people are children of God in the sense that we are created in the image and likeness of God. But through the Sacraments, that relationship is deepened, and we are plunged in the very center of the Trinity. And so, each Sacrament proclaims the death and resurrection of Christ as the meaning of history.

12:33 Liturgy as a Public Manifestation; Greek *liturgia* or ‘a Public Work’

The word “Liturgy” comes from the Greek, and it literally meant, initially, a public work of some kind: a program, an activity, a public action. In the New Testament, Liturgy not only applied to worship and sacrament, it also applied to proclaiming the Gospel and doing deeds of charity. So any public manifestation of the faith was somehow a participation in the Liturgical action.

The Catechism reminds us that the Liturgy is the work of the Holy Trinity. So when you think about what's heaven going to be like, it's fundamentally an act of worship.

13:19 What Are We Going to Do in heaven?

So when people say, "What do you think heaven's going to be like?"

I always say, "It's going to be a lot like going to Mass."

And if they're not particularly thrilled with Mass, they look at me, like, "Well, I hope it's something more interesting than that." Right? (laughter)

But, what are we going to do in heaven? We're going to worship and adore God. We're going to be in a completely perfect, loving communion with each other, and we're going to celebrate the wedding feast of the Lamb. That's what we're going to do in heaven, forever.

What do we do at Mass? We worship God. We come together in this loving communion with each other as the Church, and we celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb. So, the Catechism reminds us in this section that every earthly Liturgy, every Mass, every Sacrament is a sharing in that divine, heavenly Liturgy where all of the redeemed, all of the Saints, perpetually worship God.

14:31 *Liturgia, Our Act of Worship: Isaiah 6 & Luke 5*

So, worship is the most fundamental human action.

We see it throughout the Scripture. So in [Isaiah, Chapter 6](http://uscgb.org/bible/isaiah/6), (or <http://uscgb.org/bible/isaiah/6>) Isaiah the prophet details this remarkable vision that he has of the glory of God in the Temple. He says, "The Temple was just filled with the glory of God, the radiance of God. And, the temple was filled with smoke, and the doorposts of the Temple shook when he heard the angels sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts."

So when we sing the Sanctus at Mass, it's the song that the angels sing before the throne of God. It's the song that Isaiah heard the angels sing in his vision. And when one experiences God, the automatic response is to worship. So Isaiah falls flat on his face and worships the mystery of God, because God is so awesome. God is so overwhelming. God is so beautiful.

Fast forward to the New Testament, [Luke, Chapter 5](http://uscgb.org/bible/luke/5), (or <http://uscgb.org/bible/luke/5>) the miraculous catch of fish. That's where Jesus calls Simon to follow him in Luke's Gospel. And after fishing all night and catching nothing, Jesus tells Simon Peter, go out into the deep water; you'll find some fish there. The catch is so overwhelming it almost sinks the boat. And Simon realizes there is something extraordinary going on here. Or more to it, there's someone extraordinary in front of me.

It says, "He falls down at the knees of Jesus and says, 'Leave me, Lord, for I am a sinful man'!"

And Jesus responds and says, "Do not be afraid. From now on, you will be catching men."

Somebody went through all the hard work of counting how many times God says “Do not be afraid” in the Scriptures. It's 366: one for every day of the year, plus leap-year. (laughter) It's God's consistent response to humanity's experience: Do not be afraid!

But we see in both of those encounters, Isaiah and Simon Peter, that when we experience God, our automatic response is to worship.

16:49 ‘I Don’t Go to Mass Because I Do not Get Anything Out of It!’

So when someone says, "You know, I don't go to Mass, because I don't get anything out of it," I try to say as kindly as I can, "I hate to break this to you, but it's really not about you." Right? I mean, Mass is not about your experience or how you feel about it.

Imagine going to a funeral or a wedding and coming out of that and saying, "You know, that really wasn't meaningful for me." Or, "Why did I go?" Well, it wasn't about you! It was about the couple getting married, or it was about the person that we were burying. Ultimately, the Eucharist and the Sacraments are not about us or what we're feeling or what we're doing; it's about what God wants to do in us. Indeed, what God is doing in us when we open our hearts to grace.

So the ultimately, humanizing action of worship is at the very heart of culture.

17:42 ‘We Have a Need to Worship!’

Saint John Paul II reflected on this often. When we hear the word “cult” today, we think of some scary group that's going to steal your child and brainwash them. The original definition of cult is, simply, “worship.” So to experience cult, to practice cultic worship is to simply worship God. *To worship God*. I think anthropologists have shown every culture known to humanity practiced some form of religion. Religion is inscribed in the human heart. Human beings have a need to worship.

And so, at the heart of “culture” is “cult.” At the heart of the human community is the worship of God. That's why in every Medieval village in Europe, the center building of that town is the Church. The Church is at the center, because God is at the center. And when everything moves in beautiful harmony around that center, when Sunday worship is the center of life, then culture flourishes. Because, “cult” is feeding that culture. Take “cult” out of culture, you have nothing left. And I would posit that a large part of our crisis today in our culture is the fact that many people do not practice “cult.” So if we stop worshipping God we forget who we are because we no longer know who God is. But if we live in a culture where all we see is what we have done and the wonder of our

technology, and we never lift our eyes to the heavens, we never end up worshipping. Or, perhaps we end up worshipping ourselves.

So, the Sacraments, the Liturgy, “cult,” worship, all of that is at the very heart -- not only of the Catholic Church, but of the human experience. And in Jesus we see how all of that is made manifest for us in His dying and His rising.

19:54 Signs, Symbols and Sacraments

We can ponder the difference, and it's important to understand the difference between signs, symbols and Sacraments. Because, the Church uses signs and symbols in every Sacrament, but they become transformed.

So a sign is very simple, usually. Think of a stop sign. A stop sign communicates one thing: stop here. It doesn't say anything else. It doesn't ask you to do anything else. It just says, “stop right here.” So when we see that sign, it has one, direct, uncomplicated message. Signs, in a sense, are one-dimensional.

Symbols are far richer in texture. Our Church here is filled with symbols. We think of the Crucifix; or, we think of the altar; or, we see in the windows; we see in statues, we see symbols. The U.S. flag is a symbol. And symbols, like poetry, are open to interpretation and to different perceptions of meaning, aren't they? So what a United States flag means to a World War II veteran is going to be radically different than what it means to a terrorist from the Middle East. We read into symbols what we, ourselves, perceive and what we believe. And so, symbols are richer. They're like poetry. We can keep going and find deeper levels of meaning.

Sacraments go even deeper, far deeper, infinitely deeper. Because when the Church celebrates a Sacrament, we take signs and symbols, and we pray the Holy Spirit over that reality, and we believe that the Sacrament accomplishes and makes present the fullness of God.

21:52 Our Self-Offering at the Mass

There was a disturbing poll that was reported on a few months ago that said something like only 40 percent of Catholics believe that the Eucharist is not a symbol; that they truly believe in the real presence. I wonder sometimes if that's accurate, I don't know. But if it is, it shows that we have not done a great job in catechizing and in professing and in practicing what the Eucharist is for us.

So in the Mass, in the Eucharist, we take the symbols, the signs of bread and wine. And those are carried up the aisle. And think about the fact that there's a host on that plate for you when it's brought up the aisle. So symbolically, we are carried up the aisle, and we are laid on the altar as a sacrifice to the Lord. And when we give ourselves to God in the mystery of the Mass, we're offering him everything that happened to us this week, right? Our work, our joys, our sufferings, our struggles, our questions, our good deeds.

23:06 “Why Do We Have to Go to Mass?” -personal story

I was the youngest of six kids. So when I was in first grade, my mom went back to work part-time as a nurse in a Catholic nursing home. It was her favorite gig as a nurse; she loved it. And she worked every other weekend. So it was just right at that time that the Church started doing Saturday night vigil Masses for Sunday. So on the weekends that she worked, we would go to Mass Saturday night and go home and be about our business. She'd go off to work early on Sunday morning, before we were up. And lo and behold, my father would get us all out of bed at 7 in the morning and have us go to Mass again. (laughter) And, I never balked at going to Mass once, but going twice within twelve hours seemed a little much even for me. And, I would sometimes question, “why are we doing this?” Oftentimes it was the same priest, the same homily. I would say, “The priest is going to think we're nuts; like, we're fanatics. Like, we were just here last night, right?”

My father's response was unforgettable and unmovable. He'd say, "I don't care. Don't you think God has done enough for you this week that you can give him two hours of praise and thanksgiving?"

"Don't you think God has done enough for you this week that you can give him two hours?"

And, what do you do with that, except put on your clothes and go, right?

But, I really think it was my parents' passion for the Mass that, in many ways, formed my vocation to be a priest, because they understood what it was. That it's not just checking off a box, right? It's not just fulfilling this obligation. It's not just saying, “Oh, the Church says I have to do this, so I do it.”

Every Mass, every Sacrament is a living encounter with God and His love and His grace for us.

25:13 “A Minimalist or a Maximalist” -John 12

When we can create an atmosphere, a culture, a relationship within a parish where more and more people catch fire and start falling in love with God and move from a position of minimalism to maximalism, then they stop counting, right? Then we see Mass as this divine encounter with the Lord. And, we stop looking at our watches. “It's like 59 minutes; I got to get out of here,” right?

I love [John, Chapter 12](http://usccb.org/bible/john/12) (or <http://usccb.org/bible/john/12>). It's one of my favorite passages. And there's something profoundly liturgical about it. It comes right after the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Jesus goes to the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary for one final meal before his fearful Passion. And the Scripture says that Mary brings in this costly, aromatic nard, this perfume. And it cost her 300 days' wages. I have never spent 300 days' wages to buy a gift for a friend. That's extraordinary; that's almost a year's salary. I mean, it's just over-the-top. It's extreme. It's passionate. It's overwhelming.

And Mary breaks open this costly, aromatic nard and lavishes it over the feet of Christ, perhaps out of gratitude for the fact that He raised her brother from the dead in the previous chapter. Perhaps because she simply loved Him with all her heart. But, she needed to put into external expression what she felt for Christ and how grateful she was to Him. And so, that anointing is this Liturgical action -- it's putting into practice, into visible sign, into something Sacramental, this deep interiority of Mary's love for Christ.

In that same narrative, it's Judas Iscariot who questions the rationality of the expense, because he wants the money for himself, right? So I always point to that narrative as an example of what a minimalist and what a maximalist look like. Because a minimalist asks the question “What do I have to do?” What do I have to do to keep from failing this test? What do I have to do to keep from getting fired? What do I have to do as the bare minimum to stay in the game?

The maximalist asks a whole different question, because a maximalist is in love. And a maximalist asks the question, “What can I do?” Because, love looks at possibilities.

27:57 ‘Marriage is Beautiful, a Sacrament, and Marriage is Hard’

So when two people are in love with each other, they don't say, “You know, I just saw you last week. That's it. I'm not going to spend any more time with you.” Right? Because they don't count. You know, a couple doesn't say, “Well, I kissed you twice this week. That's my quota; I'm done.” Right? (laughter)

Whenever I would do marriage counseling -- I've done a lot of marriage counseling in my thirty years of priesthood -- and whenever a couple would leave, I would always thank Jesus for celibacy, because I think it's so much easier, right? (laughter) It really is.

Marriage is beautiful. Marriage is a Sacrament. And, marriage is hard. You're taking two people, two different opinions, two different ways of looking at things, and you're bringing that together into this fusion, a fusion of grace and truth. And yet, living that out! And, then you throw parenting into that, right? So God bless all of you who are married and are parents and living that extraordinary grace. I think I chose a far easier path (laughter) with celibacy.

But, I always asked a couple when I was doing counseling, "So which one of you is giving more to this relationship?"

And if they were struggling, they would both say, "I am. I'm giving more."

And I'd say, "Well, if you're both giving more, then why are you in trouble?" Right? But, it's because they started counting, right?

It's like, “Well, I'm giving more to this. So, I'm going to pull back a little bit and watch what he does.” Or, “I'm going to withdraw a little bit and see how she responds.”

So when you start counting, you're falling out of love. When you're in love, you just give everything, and you never feel like it's enough. And that's the lavishness of God, and the lavishness of the Sacraments. So, every Sacrament should be this, just overwhelming abundant, lavish embrace of God. It's Jesus anointing us with this costly, aromatic nard, returning the favor to us that Mary gave to Him. That's what we find in the Sacraments.

30:15 Sacraments, Overview

So the Church has seven Sacraments, and there are three categories of them: Sacraments of Initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist; Sacraments of Healing - Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick; and, Sacraments of Vocation, which are Marriage and Holy Orders.

30:39 Ponder your Baptism: What Day Were You Baptized?

So for us as Christians, Baptism is the primordial Sacrament. I ask you this question. If you don't know the answer, go home and research it and find out: what day were you baptized? Do you know what day you were baptized? Because, that was the most important day of your life.

I was born on August 18th, 1963; I was baptized three Sundays later on September 8, which is the birthday of the Blessed Mother. How perfect is that?

But if you don't know the day you were baptized, find out. If you can't find a record of your Baptism, find out what church you were baptized in. Call them up and ask them to send you a copy of your Baptismal Certificate. Frame that! Frame that, and hang it on your wall. Because the day that we were baptized was the day that we entered into Christ. It was the day that God entered into us.

So, I was talking before about how we become adopted children of God through the Paschal Mystery of Christ. That is made fully manifest in Baptism. So, Jesus' Baptism, it says in Mark's Gospel, that the heavens were torn open. A dove, the Spirit, descended, and a voice was heard, "This is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased." That happened on the day of our Baptism. Maybe nobody heard it. Maybe nobody saw the heavens torn open, but spiritually, they were. Because God said to you and to me on that day, "You are my beloved daughter. You are my beloved son."

To realize the meaning of Baptism is to come to stand on the brink of the abyss of God's love for us. So no wonder that Baptism uses water. It's a form of death, but also resurrection. In the early Church, people would come in on one side of the baptismal pool, be submerged, and come out on the other side, dressed in a white garment. Leaving behind on the other shore their old life, their old self. That in Baptism, we become a new creation in Christ.

32:53 Sanctifying Grace

And the power of Sanctifying Grace! Sanctifying Grace is simply the presence and the action of God within us.

In [John's Gospel](http://usccb.org/bible/john/14) (John Chpt.14, v.23 or <http://usccb.org/bible/john/14>), Jesus says that, “Those who love me and keep my commandments, we will come to live in that person. We will come to abide in that person.”

So Sanctifying Grace means that God loves us so much that He wants to make us His dwelling place in this world. That Christ, in His Eucharistic presence abides in the Tabernacle. But, God wants to abide in us through the power of Grace and that begins in Baptism. So when we are free of mortal sin, when we are serious about our discipleship in Jesus, when we are following the path of the Gospel, God, himself, lives in us.

How different the world would be if people understood that and lived that, wouldn't it? Like, if we understood that God lives in us, that I can't mistreat you if I claim to love God, because we are all united in God: the power of Baptism.

So in Baptism we take water, we bless it. We have Chrism, and we have light. And in Baptism, then, we are washed free of original sin. We enter into the Church. We become adopted children of God, and we are filled with Sanctifying Grace. Those are amazing things for what is, essentially, a very simple, simple ritual. But in Baptism, it all begins.

So, ponder your Baptism. Ponder the fact that Christ claimed you for Himself, probably as an infant, probably before we could speak, before we knew the difference between up and down. Christ had already claimed us, and passionately wants to be in relationship with us. Baptism washes away our sins.

35:01 Original Sin: “Our Need for a Front-end Alignment!”

One way I think of Original Sin is if you've ever seen a truck that is out of alignment, that needs a front-end alignment. It's going down the road, but it looks like it's going sideways, right? Because the front end is off, and you have to oversteer the other way to keep it on the road. If you just let it take its natural course, it's going to end up in the ditch. That's who we are before Baptism. We need a front-end alignment. So, Baptism takes us, who we would've been without Christ, completely aligns us, sets us straight, on the path toward heaven. And so, Baptism is the beginning of everything.

35:47

Confirmation: A Final Anointing

Confirmation in the early Church was originally part of the same sacrament. So, Confirmation was the final anointing that the bishop would do in the Sacrament of Baptism. As the church got bigger, the bishop couldn't do all the Baptisms. So, priests were ordained, and so priests share in the ministry and the priesthood of the bishop. But, the bishop retained that final anointing as kind of his way of sealing Baptism. So Confirmation eventually split off and became its own Sacrament.

I had my first Confirmations here in the diocese on Sunday out in Cuba City. And as a bishop, it's my favorite thing to do. I love rubbing the Chrism in our young peoples' heads. It's like the Holy Spirit's entering in. I love watching them in the power of that moment. I love asking them why they chose the saint that they chose. I'm glad I love Confirmations, because I probably have 60,000 more to go before I'm dead. (laughter) I try to celebrate every one as if it's my first one. Because it's the first and only time for this particular person. It's their Confirmation.

So the Theology of Confirmation is really that we receive the fullness of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And so, think of Pentecost - that glorious day fifty days after Easter when the early followers of Christ, the Apostles, some of the holy women, the Blessed Mother are gathered in the upper room ardently praying for the outpouring of the Spirit. And the Spirit arrives in the form of wind and flame, and they are transformed.

I always wonder what went on up there. I mean, did their hair catch on fire? Did they get thrown against the wall? We don't know. What we do know is the difference the Holy Spirit makes. Because, before they received the Holy Spirit, they are afraid. They are disunited. They don't proclaim the risen Jesus. They don't know what to do.

After they receive the Spirit, they go out and they proclaim the Kerygma, the death and resurrection of the Christ, the birth of the Church. We talked about that last week.

Confirmation is our Pentecost experience. When we receive the fullness of the anointing of the Spirit, the fire and the energy of God so that we can go out and be the disciples that God has called us to be. So, those two Sacraments are always linked. Confirmation is really the fulfillment and the completion of Baptism.

39:48 Bishop Hying's Awakening Moment as Call to Priesthood

It was forty years ago this very day. It was October 1, 1979, that Pope John Paul II came to the United States for the first time as pope. Some of us are old enough to remember that. It was really the first time a pope had come to this country. Pope Paul VI had visited in 1965. He went to the United Nations, gave an address about peace to the UN Assembly, did a Mass at Shea Stadium in New York City, and left in all of about sixteen hours. It was just this jam-packed day.

But a pope had never visited America for a long week, as John Paul did that week of 1979. And he landed in Boston. He had just come from his pilgrimage to Ireland. So he flew from Shannon, Ireland, to Boston. And, that was a week that electrified this country, if you remember. On Friday he had a Mass at Grant Park in Chicago and then went to Washington. Met with President Carter on Saturday; it was the first time a pope had ever been in the White House. And through that week, John Paul just spoke of the love of Christ. And he was still in his first year of his pontificate. Those of us that only remember the tail end of his pontificate, just think of him as being old and sick. When he was elected, he was 58. So, he could jump off stages. He could throw babies into the air and mercifully catch them, right? (laughter) He was this person of absolute vitality and exuberance.

And it was in that week that I really, definitively heard my call to the priesthood. I was working my first restaurant job. I was making \$2.32 an hour, and even then that was really bad wages. (laughter) I felt vastly utilized and exploited. I had graduated from washing dishes to frying chicken. So, it's Saturday night of the pope's week in America. It's 2 a.m. I'm in this restaurant closing up. I'm up to my armpits in chicken grease, scrubbing out fryers, and I have the radio on to keep myself awake. And over the radio, lo and behold, comes the inimitable voice of John Paul. It was a recording of a speech he had given earlier in the day. And, he was talking to the young people of America. And he said, "Young people of the United States. God is calling you to a life of radical holiness."

I was 16; I was young. I put down my scrubby thing and listened.

He said, "God is calling many of you to the priesthood and religious life. So if you hear that call, don't be afraid of it. Just say "yes" to it. Because when you give your life to Christ, He will do things with you, through you, for you that you can't even imagine."

At that moment, I felt as if the pope had come out of the radio and was standing in front of me in that kitchen saying, "God wants you. Christ needs you. The Church is calling you."

At that moment, I had this absolute conviction that God was calling me to be a priest, and that conviction never left. It was like, from that moment forty years ago to right now, I've always felt that, if I give my life to Christ in this way, then I'm fulfilling my mission. So I pray that each of us at some level, perhaps not with such clarity -- I always felt that God gave me such absolute clarity because I was weak, and I needed it. Sometimes you have to search around a little bit to find what God is calling you to do. But at the bottom of it all is the common vocation of Baptism -- that we are called to give our lives to Christ and to become saints and to live in this world as a new creation. That was forty years ago today then; Saint John Paul started that remarkable journey to America.

44:18 Eucharist as Sacrifice

So, we're talking about the Sacraments. We reflected on Baptism and Confirmation. The Eucharist for us as Catholics is everything, isn't it? The Eucharist is what constitutes and builds up the Church. The Mass, for us, contains within it the whole reality of our faith. So if you get the Mass, you get Catholicism. If you understand the Eucharist, you really understand the essential kernel of everything that we believe about God.

I think there are four fundamental ways of looking at the Mass. And the first one is sacrifice. So, we call it the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The word "sacrifice" comes from two Latin words: "sacra" and "factura," which means to "make holy" or to set aside for a holy purpose. We see by that definition that Christ himself is the sacrifice of the Father. That the Father sets aside the Son for this holy purpose of saving the human race and gives him away to us -- in His incarnation, in His ministry, in His miracles, in His preaching, and ultimately in His death on the cross and the triumph of the Resurrection. So, we are called to make a sacrifice of our life to God, as Christ makes a sacrifice of Himself to us.

We could say in kind of fancy language that the Crucifixion of Jesus is a historical event, but also a trans-historical event. It's historical in the sense that, on a specific moment, on a specific day two thousand years ago in this specific place the Son of God died on the cross. It's a historical event, as is the Resurrection. But, it's also a supernatural event. Because, it wasn't simply a man dying on a cross; it was God giving Himself completely for us and for the salvation of the world. So, the Mass is our participation in that total gift of Jesus to the Father on our behalf. In that sense, every Mass plugs into the supernatural electricity of Jesus' sacrifice. So, in this time and in this place for these people in this moment, the sacrifice of Jesus is made manifest to us.

So, yes, Jesus died once for all, for all of us. There's one sacrifice. But every time we offer Mass, we participate in that sacrifice again. Here. Now. And if you listen carefully, all the prayers at Mass are oriented to the Father, through Jesus Christ, the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. So in the Mass, Jesus is offering himself and praying to the Father. And we, as the Body of Christ, participate in that priestly prayer. And our lives, then, are called to become a sacrifice, as well. That just as Jesus is broken and poured out, given away on the cross, so, too, we are called to make a gift of ourselves -- to hand ourselves over for a sacred and holy purpose.

Sacrifice isn't always difficult, but it has a negative connotation, doesn't it? To make a sacrifice means it's going to hurt; it's going to cost me something. Because to sacrifice means I have to live on this high level of loving. And it means the death of my selfishness and sin and just my own comfort and complacency. So, sacrifice does cost us something because it calls us to live on this profound level of self-giving, as Jesus gives Himself to us -- the Sacrifice of the Mass.

48:21 Eucharist as Thanksgiving/Gratitude

The second (way of looking at the Mass) is Thanksgiving. The word "Eucharist" means thanksgiving. For us as Christians, thanksgiving isn't simply the fourth Thursday of November, because you can't compress gratitude into just one little square on the calendar; it's a way of life. When we realize the enormity of what God has done for us, when we realize the power of salvation offered to us -- the gift of eternal life; when we think of the transforming mercy of forgiveness that Jesus gives us; when we think of what our life would be without Christ, without salvation, without light at the end of the tunnel, without mercy, we realize the enormity of who God is and what He has given us.

G. K. Chesterton put it well. He said, "I came to discover that life was magic. And if it was magic, there had to be a magician who pulled all of this out of His hat. And, the magician is God."

So, God created this world. He created us. We have our senses. We have a mind. We have a heart. We can know. We can love. We can enter into a relationship with God and others. We have Jesus. We have the Church. We have the Sacraments. We have the Scriptures. We have the Catechism. We have food to eat and clothes to wear. We have friends and family. When you think about it, our whole life is just filled with so many gifts. And so, gratitude becomes our fundamental stance toward God -- because we realize how much has been given.

Our culture of entitlement will never have enough. Because you can never have enough of what you don't need, right? You can never have enough of what you don't need. So, you always need a bigger house, a bigger car, more money, more clothes, if that's your thing. But at the end of the day, you're only going to live in a couple of rooms, and you can only wear one set of clothes at a time, and what do you really need? Right? So entitlement always wants more, and it's never satisfied, because it thinks it has to get higher.

But gratitude gladly takes the lowest place, because it realizes how much has already been given. So when we live in a fundamental posture of gratitude toward God, then we cling less to things, and we happily pass on the gifts that we've received to others. We know that that's what they're meant for -- that we're here to share and to serve. So at Mass, we give thanks to God -- fundamentally for the gift of Jesus, crucified and risen.

51:09 “Would You Go to that Man’s Funeral?”

Whenever I would be teaching the Eucharist to students, I would say, "Imagine this: you're asleep at night and your bedroom is on the second floor of your house. And you wake up in the middle of the night, and you smell smoke. And you just went to a fire prevention safety training at school, so you know not to open the door. But, you touch the door, and it's too hot to touch. So you know that the fire's right on the other side of your door. The only way you're going to get out of that room is to open the window and jump. And, it's cold; it's the middle of winter, and it's a high house. And you open that window, and then you freeze.

"And just then, a fireman breaks into your room from the hallway, grabs you and physically throws you out the window – throws you into life. And, somebody down below catches you. You're saved. But you find out the next day that, the fireman who saved your life, himself died of smoke inhalation in the flames. So, he traded his life for yours. He gave his life so that you could live.

"Would you go to that man's funeral?"

Well, of course! How would his family feel if you stayed home and watched cartoons instead of going to the funeral? That you were ungrateful. And, this man died for me! This man died for me. The least I can do is show up and pay public thanks.

If you understand that story, you understand the Mass. Because you understand that Jesus traded His life for ours, that He died on the cross so that we could live forever. They ask us to come together at least once a week for an hour to pay public praise and gratitude for

the enormity of that gift. And when we do so, our lives are filled with His gifts even more. We hear his Holy Word. We receive his Sacred Body in the Eucharist. We're nourished with the very life of God.

53:16 Eucharist as Banquet- We Consume the Resurrected Christ!

So if Baptism gives spiritual birth to us, if Confirmation anoints us into the Holy Spirit and into the priesthood of Jesus, the Eucharist nourishes us and feeds us. Like any good mother, the Church gives birth to us and constantly cooks for us -- gives us another meal, gives us another dinner.

So, the third image of the Eucharist is that of banquet. And when we read the book of Revelation... In many ways, the book of Revelation is frightening; it's apocalyptic; it's about the end of the world. But underneath all of that kind of noise and fury, underneath all of that, is a fundamental Eucharistic vision. Because it talks about the saints gathered around the throne of God, giving thanks and praise. So, back to the earthly Liturgy participating in the heavenly Liturgy and sharing in the wedding feast of the Lamb. So, Christ marries us through the consummation of His death and resurrection on the cross. We are the Body of Christ, but we are also the Bride of Christ. And so, the Eucharist's banquet is this abundance, this abundance of life that is given to us.

Before I made my First Communion, I'd ask my Mom, "What do you do up there when you go up to the Communion rail?"

And she said, "We receive the Body of Jesus."

But in my little four-year-old mind, I'm thinking, "What if they run out of Jesus' body before I'm old enough to get up there?" (laughter) Right? "What if there isn't enough?"

So, I asked that question. Her answer was great. My mom never studied theology, but I think she was the greatest theologian in my life. She said, "Jesus loves us so much that there will always be enough of Him to go around and to feed everybody until the end of the world." So, my little mind could be at rest. Jesus loves us so much that there's enough of Him to go around until the end of the world. This abundance, this banquet, this Bread of Life.

John, [Chapter 6](#), (or <http://uscceb.org/bible/john/6>) is all about the Eucharist. And Jesus says there, "Unless you eat of my flesh and drink of my blood, you will have no life within you." There we see a beautiful exposition of a real presence.

The word in the original Greek for flesh is “sarx,” which is very gritty -- almost like meat... “Unless you *eat* my body.” What happens in John, Chapter 6? Most of Jesus' disciples walk away because they fundamentally misunderstand, and they're scandalized, and they're horrified. And, what does He do? He doesn't say, “Come back, guys. Let me re-explain this or re-define it.” He lets them go.

And he says to Simon Peter, “Are you going to leave, too?”

And Simon Peter's answer: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of everlasting life.”

So, for two thousand years, the Catholic church has consistently, valiantly, stubbornly, courageously, clung to our conviction that in the Eucharist, we have the fullness of the presence of the risen Christ in Sacramental form. That the same Jesus Christ who died on Calvary and rose from the dead abides here in the tabernacle to feed us. If you believe that, it changes everything. *If you believe that, it changes everything.* Because it means that Christ comes to us in this very physical way -- that we become what we eat.

Ponce de Leon was one of the Spanish explorers, and he was looking for the fountain of youth. So, there were these myths going around Europe that somewhere in the New World was this magic fountain, and if you drank its water, you would live forever; you would escape death. He never found the fountain of youth, but he found Florida, instead. (laughter) So, he found where they built Disneyland eventually, or Disney World.

When you think about it, the Eucharist is our fountain of youth. When we feast on the fullness of the Eucharistic Christ, it is our pledge of immortality. We will live forever, because we have received the immortal life of Christ within us in the Bread of Life.

Saint John Paul II said that, "When we consume the Eucharist, we digest the great secret of the Resurrection." Isn't that great?! We digest the great secret of the Resurrection, that the risen Christ beats in us, lives within our flesh.

So whenever I pass out the Eucharist at Mass, I never fail to be moved. I think about how Jesus Christ has traveled this infinite distance from heaven to come down upon our altar - not to stay there, but to be carried down these steps, to be shared with all of you. So, here comes Jesus Christ from the mystery of eternity; here come all of his people. And, each of you has made this journey up the aisle from the moment that you were conceived to this moment of encounter with Christ. And as a minister of the altar, I'm privileged to hand over the Eucharist: this Jesus who's traveled so far. You, who have traveled so far in

this Communion. And then in that moment, Jesus Christ and we are one in this banquet of mercy, in this fusion of God's love for us.

59:16 “If Every Catholic Understood and Believed in the Eucharist...”

So if every Catholic understood and believed in the Eucharist, we would have a 100 percent Mass attendance, wouldn't we? Not just on Sundays, but during the week. And maybe some people don't believe in the Eucharist, because it seems too good to be true. Could God really love me that much? The answer is "yes." Would God go through all the trouble of becoming a simple piece of bread for me? That small that he could fit into my life? Yes.

Think of the humility and the poverty of the Eucharist -- that Christ literally places himself into our power, in a sense-- the vulnerability of His love for us in this Sacrament.

So, we can never forget that at the Last Super, hours before Jesus was arrested, imprisoned, tortured and killed, He wasn't thinking of himself; He was thinking of us. He was thinking, “What is the most efficacious, imaginative, beautiful, true way that I can abide with people until the end of the world -- that I can live in them, that I can be one with them?” And His answer is the Eucharist. So the answer is the gift of Jesus' heart to us, hours before His passion and death, and that's what we remember at Mass in this banquet.

1:00:48 Eucharist as Memorial

And the fourth image of Eucharist is memorial -- that we remember. We call to our mind and heart, not just past, historical events, but the ongoing power and grace of Jesus in this moment. So, sacrifice, thanksgiving, banquet, memorial: four images that help explain and help us understand the Mass.

1:01:15 Reconciliation: God’s Way of Cleansing Us

(There are) two Sacraments of Healing. The first is Reconciliation.

Our sins are washed away in Baptism, but because we don't live in heaven yet, we're going to sin after Baptism. So Confession – Reconciliation -- becomes God's way of cleansing us anew, forgiving our sins, and giving us the grace and the power that flow from Jesus crucified and risen, so that we can continue our pilgrim journey to the Father's house.

So when somebody is baptized but doesn't go to confession at all, I always say it's like somebody saying, “I took a bath thirty years ago, haven't since. What's the big deal?” Right? (laughter) I don't think you'd want to be around that person, right?

Confession makes manifest for us the mercy of Christ in this moment.

1:02:06 Why Do I Have to Go to a Priest for Confession?

So a lot of people ask, “Why do I have to go to a priest to have my sins forgiven? Why can't I just talk to God directly and ask him to forgive my sins? You know, why can't that just be?”

The simple answer is Jesus set it up this way -- Confession. But, the scriptural answer lies in [John](#), Chapter 20 (or <http://uscgb.org/bible/john/20>). So, think back with me to the night of Easter Sunday. Jesus has risen from the dead, the apostles are locked in the upper room in fear, and suddenly Jesus is there with them -- comes through the wall, comes through the locked door. And He says and does three things: He wishes them peace; He breathes the Holy Spirit on them; and, He commissions them to go forth and to forgive sins.

He wishes them peace. He gives them the power of the Holy Spirit and makes them ministers of Reconciliation. And he says, "The sins you bind are bound. The sins you unbind are unbound." So how could one make a prudential judgment about sin unless here's something like Confession. Right?

1:03:26 Confession as Psychologically Therapeutic

Confession is also psychologically therapeutic, I think. Because, when we bear guilt within ourselves, we want to be purged of that guilt. We want that shame to be healed. I think all of us have had the experience of realizing in a very painful way the damage that a selfish action on our part has caused -- not only ourselves, but somebody else. I'm sure

all of us have struggled with, you know, “Can I ever be forgiven of this?” Or, “Could this person ever forgive me?”

Perhaps we've struggled with the converse: Can I ever forgive that person?

Confession is this beautiful place! I come in, laden with all my sins, and I lay that down, not at the priest's feet -- I lay that at Jesus' feet. The priest is acting in persona Christi. And I speak my sin. And the priest speaks Jesus' mercy. And I hear those words, “I absolve you of your sins; you are forgiven. Go in peace.” Confession, then, is an extension of a mercy of God in our lives -- throughout our lives, until the end of the world, until the end of us in this present state.

1:04:43 How Often Should I Go to Confession?

When somebody asks me, “How often should I go to Confession?” I always say, “Once a month.” If you're not going at all, that might sound wild and crazy. But I always think, after a month, I start losing focus. I start forgetting what virtues I'm working on, and what sins I'm trying to eradicate from my life.

So you'd think that the more you go to Confession, the less you'd have to confess. It'd be kind of like, “Well, I got this all cleaned up. I'm almost ready. I'm done.” I find the opposite to be true. Because the more I go to Confession, the more I see the beauty and the perfection of God. The more even my little sins become something that I want to give to the Lord and have Him take away.

So the greatest saints always saw themselves as the greatest sinners. And, I always thought, “Yeah, that's just false humility. You know you're a great saint. You're just saying that because that's part of being a saint.” But I think they really saw themselves as great sinners, because the closer you are to a source of light, the more pronounced your shadow. The closer you are to the light, the more you see your imperfections. The closer you are to the light, the more even that one little rain mark on a window becomes intolerable. So, Confession is God's way of cleaning us, forgiving us, purifying us.

1:06:14 “I Am Afraid the Priest Will Judge Me in My Confession”

Sometimes people are afraid to come to Confession, because they think the priest is going to judge them. The priest is not there to judge. The priest is there to be an instrument of mercy. The priest is there to proclaim the forgiveness of Christ. And, I think, God gives us the gift of amnesia. So, if somebody confesses their sins in Confession, the next time I see that person, I'm not thinking about what they confessed, right? Just in case you were

wondering, you know? (laughter) It's like, "Oh yeah, you said that last month." Right? We don't think that. Because I think God just cleanses us. He gives us amnesia. We don't remember that. Plus, I'm just so overjoyed and grateful, as I know all of our priests would be, that this person has come to Confession.

There are times you get people that the last time they went to Confession was six days ago. It's great that they're back. There are other times you get somebody, "The last time I was here was forty years ago, Father." And I always ask the question, "What brought you today? What triggered you to come back to Confession today?" There's always an amazing story -- an amazing story where God has finally led this person to realize that, "I don't have to carry this burden of guilt and sin anymore. I can lay it down, and I don't have to pick it up again."

Think of the prodigal son. He finally comes to his senses and goes home and makes his confession to his father, and the father rushes to forgive him. So to find God's forgiveness, all we have to do is pick ourselves up and go home to the Father's house and make our Confession. And if we are sincere, we are forgiven: the power of Reconciliation.

1:08:04 Anointing of the Sick

The other Sacrament of Healing is Anointing of the Sick. When you think about it, so much of Jesus' ministry in the Scriptures was healing the sick: healing the blind, the deaf, those with paralyzed limbs, healing people of all sorts of maladies and afflictions -- because He wanted to restore their human integrity. Salvation is not simply about what happens to us in the next life, but God wants us to have this abundance of life now.

So, we anoint people when they are on the verge of death. It used to be called Extreme Unction. We still do that. We also anoint people that are in serious need of Jesus' healing touch: people that are facing cancer; people that are going into serious surgery; people that struggle with heavy, emotional or psychological difficulties. And, we believe that Jesus will heal that person somehow. The physical illness may not be taken away; (but) will that person not be given Grace to somehow see that this suffering is uniting them closer to Jesus. That the sick person, themselves, in a sense, becomes an extension of the suffering Christ. And, we anoint that person with holy oil.

1:09:28 Personal Testimony of God’s Healing Love

My first assignment: There was a little boy in fourth grade named Tommy and he was a character. So one day I was in his class teaching religion, and I asked, “What is conscience? What does conscience mean?”

Tommy raised his hand, and he said, “I’m not sure, but I think it’s this thing that God puts in your head that makes you go mental.” (laughter)

And I thought, “Well, that’s a start.”(more laughter) That’s a beginning, right?

So about a month after that, Tommy runs out into the road in front of church and gets hit by a car. And, he’s in a coma in the hospital. After a few weeks, they’re ready to turn off the machines and just say, “it’s over.” He’s nine years old; he’s in fourth grade!

My pastor and I went up and anointed him with the Sacrament of the Sick. And at the end of it, he woke up. And two days later, he was out of the hospital. And a week later, he was back in school. I thought, “this stuff really works, right!?” (laughter) I mean, that’s dramatic; that doesn’t happen always. It may not even happen often. But Jesus wants to heal us. And sometimes, perhaps, we’re not bold enough to dare to believe that He can. But He wants to heal us and restore us. And sometimes we pray really hard that somebody that has cancer be healed, and they’re not. And they die. We can feel that that prayer didn’t work. But somehow, healing is still going on. The power of Jesus is somehow still being made manifest.

So, two Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick.

1:11:12 Holy Orders, Bishops, Priests, Deacons

Two Sacraments of Vocation:

Holy Orders. So, Holy Orders are bishops, priests and deacons. It’s interesting that from the very beginning of His ministry, Jesus was not a “Lone Ranger.” He chooses Apostles, and he intensively and very purposely forms them so they will carry on His mission after He ascends back to heaven. And so, the bishops are successors to the Apostles. The Apostolic succession means that I was ordained by Archbishop ListECKI of Milwaukee, who was ordained by Cardinal George of Chicago, who was ordained by some Italian Cardinal that I don’t know that goes all the way back to Simon Peter. So, it’s this unbroken chain, this unbroken Apostolic succession.

So, bishop is the pastor, the shepherd, the priest of the local church that we call a diocese. And as much as I felt called to the priesthood, I never thought in a million years I'd ever be a bishop. You know, it's just like, I don't know what God was thinking, because I don't feel qualified to do this at all. I think my paperwork got mixed up on a desk in the Vatican with somebody else's. (laughter)

But it's great being a bishop, because in some ways it's like being a parish priest, only you're in a bigger parish. So I look at the beauty of our diocese: 102 parishes, 45 schools, 220,000 Catholics, Catholic Charities, Saint Vincent de Paul, Knights of Columbus! I mean, just the myriad of activity and organizations and relationships that comprise this diocese. And, I'm set loose in it to do as much good as I can, as long as I can, as your bishop.

And priests: So as the church grew, obviously the Apostles couldn't do everything, so they start ordaining men as presbyters, as priests, to share in their priesthood -- and deacons to do the corporal works of mercy. So we see in [Acts of the Apostles](http://usccb.org/bible/acts/6) (or <http://usccb.org/bible/acts/6>) where they call seven men to be deacons of the church.

1:13:11 Ordained Priesthood Is at the Service of your Baptized Priesthood

So our ordained priesthood is at the service of your Baptized priesthood. We are here as ordained servants to enable you to live out your priesthood, which you received in Baptism.

A priest is a bridge, a point of connection, a mediator between God and people. You can clearly see that in our ministry, but it's also present in you, because you rub shoulders with all sorts of people that will never necessarily connect with us. You may be the only Christ, you may be the only priest, that someone in this work encounters.

As laity, you are sent into the world to sanctify the world, and to anoint the world with that fragrance of Christ that Mary did when she broke open the aromatic nard.

So priests, people in Holy Orders, proclaim the Gospel, teach the faith, celebrate the Sacraments, and shepherd God's holy people. And I love teaching, that's why I love doing things like this.

1:14:46 Marriage as Vocation

The other Sacrament of Vocation is, of course, Marriage. And, even in my joke previously about Marriage, the church holds Marriage in such great esteem, that she calls it a Sacrament. So when a man and a woman are called by God to sacramentally give themselves to Christ and to each other in this Holy Sacrament of Matrimony, we see that as much a sacrament as Baptism, as Eucharist, as Holy Orders. So, we have great esteem for Marriage and the beautiful spirituality of it -- that this couple manifest the love between Christ and the Church, as Saint Paul articulates in his Letter to the [Ephesians](http://usccb.org/bible/ephesians/5) (or <http://usccb.org/bible/ephesians/5>). So in that giving and receiving, in that forgiving and sacrificing, in all that goes into weaving a marriage and creating a family, God's grace is manifest. And so, we can look at a married couple and say, "This is what Christ's love looks like, because we see it in this marriage. We see it in this couple." And so, Marriage is part of the Paschal Mystery, this dying and rising. This dying to self and this rising to new life in the greatness of the Lord.

1:16:06 Sign, Symbol and Sacrament in the Seven Sacraments!

So, in all seven Sacraments, something physical, a sign, a symbol is taken, set apart, consecrated through the Holy Spirit and becomes the presence of God.

In Baptism, it's water, oil, light; in Confirmation it's chrism; in the Eucharist it's the bread and the wine; in Confession it's the formula of absolution; in Anointing it's the holy oil. But in Holy Orders and Marriage, I would say it's the people themselves. Right?

In Marriage, you could talk about the rings. You could talk about the vows. But in the end, isn't it the husband and the wife, themselves, who give the Sacrament to each other and become that Sacramental presence in the world -- as are those ordained into Holy Orders. So, something physical -- a sign, a symbol, a created reality -- becomes a Sacrament through the power of the Holy Spirit. We see that most powerfully, of course, in the Most Holy Eucharist where this bread and wine become the living Body and Blood of Christ.

1:17:36 God Chose to Stay with Us!

So in this real presence, in this real presence of the Lord, we see the depths of His love for us. We see the power of Jesus who wants to live with us, the Son of God who visited this planet two thousand years ago and fell so in love with us that He chose to stay. And He stays perpetually through the mystery of the Eucharist. That's how much He loves us. But each Sacrament draws us into that life.

Think of what a mother does. A mother gives birth to her children. A mother heals her children, and a mother feeds her children. A mother forgives her children. A mother serves her children. The Church, as any good mother, through the Sacraments does those same saving actions for us. The Church is our Mother, as truly as God is our Father.

So, I think I'm done, and I think I'm running out of voice. But, I just want to thank you for being here tonight. Maybe we could just close with a prayer of praise and glory to the Most Holy Eucharist.

“In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Lord Jesus, we thank you for your Eucharistic presence. We thank you for feeding us with your Sacred Body. We thank you for your death on the Cross and your Resurrection. For it is in these mysteries that we are saved and that we are drawn into the life of the Father. That we become children of the Father, just as you are the Son of the Father.

“We thank you for the Eucharist, for the Most Blessed Sacrament, for your true and real presence that abides here with us. And we see in this Eucharist the perpetual pledge of your love for us, poured out on the Cross and made manifest in the Resurrection.

“We lift our hearts to you. We love you. We glorify you. We give you thanks and praise. Consecrate us anew that our life may be a sacrifice, a service, a gift of self for the salvation of the world, for the salvation of our brothers and sisters. We lift to you all of our intentions and all of our hopes and all of our sorrows. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

“In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Thank you for coming tonight. How beautiful to be with you! Thank you.