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Day of Recollection for the Priests of the Diocese of Metuchen
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Imitating What We Celebrate: The Priest as Catalyst for the Church's Eucharistic Revitalization

- Introduction

- Very happy and honored to be here. Grateful to Bishop Checchio and Fr. Ken Brighenti for the invitation. Very good to be back to days like this after much has been shut down over the course of the last two years. Like he did with his first priests during their seminary formation, Jesus calls us to come away for a while to rest with him.
- The last few years have not been easy for priests. In addition to the normal challenges we've had to face, we had to deal with shutdowns to parish life, activity and even the capacity to celebrate the Sacraments with our people. We've had to deal with the pastoral consequences of the sexual abuse scandals, including high figures in the Church. We've had to deal with the consequences of political polarization as it invades our Churches and where the vitriol that often characterizes our politics poisons community life and Christ's command to love our neighbor. We've likewise had to face the situation that after the lockdowns were ended and people were able to return to Church, a sizeable percentage has not yet returned. These challenges and so many others that come from our work are real. They weigh on the heart of every priest and pastor.
- Today the eternal high priest who called us to be with him and sent us out to act in his person says "Come to me all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest." He then tells us how he will give us rest: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me ... and you will find rest for yourselves, for my yoke is easy and my burden light." His yoke, we know, is the Cross. It's easy, meaning in the Greek "it fits well." The burden is light when we recognize that he is with us to lift it. We don't often look at Jesus' words "Deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow me" as something that will refresh us, but Jesus is saying the same thing here in different words. He's asking us to yoke ourselves to him, to become *con-iugum* — a word that symbolizes the type of loving bond that is meant to unite us — and promises that that priestly way of the Cross will be light, sweet and restorative.
- The greatest way we have a chance to do that is by means of the communion of life and love we enter through the celebration of the Mass and the reception of Jesus in Holy Communion. He yokes us to him on the inside. We learn from him interiorly the meek power he imparts and the humble courage he gives. This is a Lenten theme, as we enter through the celebration of the Mass into the new and eternal Passover. But this is a theme for 365 days a year.
- I've entitled this first talk, "Imitating What We Celebrate: The Priest as Catalyst for the Church's Eucharistic Revitalization" so that we can focus together on the Holy Eucharist in the life of priests and how the priest's Eucharistic faith, life and prioritization is meant to spur the whole Church toward recognizing the "res mirabilis" we have and unleash the revitalizing power of lives lived in communion with God.
- We know the statistics. Before COVID, 21.1 percent of American Catholics attended Mass each Sunday (CARA), but since COVID, it's now 12 percent. With young people, as we're aware, the statistics are bleaker. Beyond that there's a huge problem of catechesis. In 2019, the Pew Research Center's survey showed that Only 50 percent of U.S. Catholics said that they knew the Church's teaching that after the consecration, the bread and wine are totally changed into Jesus' body and blood; 45 percent said that the Church teaches that the "bread" and "wine" are only symbols, and five percent didn't know what the Church teaches. Even among the 50 percent of those who were aware of the Church's teaching, a third said that they still regarded the Eucharist as a symbol, leaving a total of only 31 percent who actually believed the Church's teaching. 69 percent of Catholics said that they believe that the Eucharist was just a symbol — that Jesus is not on the altar after the consecration, or in the tabernacle, or in us after Holy Communion.

- So there's not only a huge catechetical effort that needs to be made for every age cohort but an urgent need for those who do understand the gift of Jesus' real presence, those who do come to Mass each Sunday, and a fortiori those who come to Mass daily or have the awesome privilege for Jesus to hijack their accents and their very person as he says "This is my Body," and "This is the chalice of my Blood," to show by our choices, our priorities, our conversation, how lucky we are to have a God so close to us as the Lord, our God, is in the Holy Eucharist.
- Beginning this June, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, the US Bishops will launch a three-year Eucharistic Revitalization initiative. It is entitled, "My flesh for the life of the world," taken from Jesus' Eucharistic discourse. They've asked for 50 priest Missionaries of the Eucharist to preach Eucharistic revivals first for Diocesan events and then in parishes as opportunities for everyone to focus on the gift Christ gives us for our life. I'm honored to have been asked to be one of the 50. After a year dedicated to Dioceses and then another to parishes there will be a huge National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis — the first since 1976 — in July 2024 at which they hope to commission and send out 80,000 lay Eucharistic Missionaries. It's bold and ambitious. It's certainly timely. But it will only succeed if priests get on board together. The priest really is the catalyst for the Church's Eucharistic Revitalization when we imitate what we celebrate as we were instructed the day we became priests. Eucharistic revitalization begins with priests genuinely living Eucharistic lives.
- Eucharistic Life
 - On a day of recollection, we can ask ourselves, sincerely, before the Lord, do we really live a Eucharistic life?
 - We know that the Second Vatican Council said that the celebration of the Mass is meant to be the *fons et culmen*, "the source and summit" of the Christian life, the starting point from which everything flows and the goal toward which everything goes. Is the Mass, is the meeting of Jesus in the Eucharist and entering into his new and eternal Passover, the alpha and the omega of my life. Does everything really start from the Eucharist? Is that where I get my strength? Is that where I draw my life? Do I direct everything to Jesus in the Eucharist — my joys, my sufferings, my sorrows, my dreams, my goals, my friendships? Is the Eucharist just part of my life, even a really important part of my life, or the source and summit, root and center, of my existence as a human being, as a disciple, as an apostle?
 - There's the famous story of the martyrs of Abitene from 304. They were told by the Roman prefect that if they assembled on Sunday morning for Mass, they would be arrested and executed. They thanked him for the notice... but then still all 49 Christians in the town came together on the Lord's Day. When the flabbergasted prefect asked them why they didn't heed his warning, one of them, Emeritus, simply said, "*Sine Dominico non possumus!*" "Without the Lord on Sunday, we cannot live." Can we live without the Lord any day of the week?
 - One of the most consequential things in my life happened September 24, 1988. I was a freshman in college. Thanks to growing up in a faithful Catholic home, I had always taken my faith seriously, gone to Sunday Mass, served as an altar boy, worked in a rectory for five years. I had never missed Sunday Mass or a Holy Day of Obligation. Occasionally I would even go to a daily Mass. But I had never really thought about the consequences of our Eucharistic faith. That day, on my own for the first time, I asked myself, "If it's really the Lord in Holy Communion, is there anything more important I could be doing on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday than receiving God inside?" From that day, until today, which is 12,240 days, I have, thanks to God's grace, never missed Mass or receiving Jesus on Good Friday or the Easter Vigil. God helped me to see then that I couldn't make it without him.
 - That's why it's so incongruous, brothers, to be really direct, that a priest, who is the only creature in the entire universe capable of bringing the Son of God from heaven to the altar, would choose not to celebrate Mass on a given day. During COVID, I had one priest tell me that he hadn't celebrated Mass since the last public Mass before the shutdown. When I was a young priest, there were several priests I knew in my Diocese who would not celebrate Mass on their days off. Their days off — when theoretically they had no pastoral obligations, they had much more time than a typical day — they would choose not to celebrate Mass. Now it's not a sin not to celebrate Mass each day. The

Code of Canon Law says that priests are “earnestly invited to offer the sacrifice of the Eucharist daily,” a lesser commitment than the Liturgy of the Hours, which we are “obliged to fulfill . . . daily in accordance with the proper and approved liturgical books.” But while it is not sinful not to celebrate, it’s hard to imagine that a priest who went without celebrating Mass for several weeks under the shutdown, or who goes without celebrating Mass one or two days a week — or whenever he is not scheduled for a public Mass in Church — is making Jesus in the Eucharist the source and summit of his life.

- A huge motivation for me has always been Jesus’ words to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. Jesus told her in 1675, pointing to his heart, “Behold the heart that has so much loved men that it has spared nothing, even exhausting and consuming itself in testimony of its love. Instead of gratitude, I receive from most only indifference, irreverence, sacrilege, coldness and scorn that men have for me in the sacrament of love,” Jesus’ expression for the gift of himself in the Eucharist. If that wasn’t enough, he went on, “What I feel the most keenly is that it is hearts that are consecrated to me that treat me in this way.” It matters to him that after taking on our humanity, entering our world, being betrayed, tortured, crucified and killed, and giving his body and shedding his blood, that “most” would respond to him indifference, irreverence, coldness, sacrilege and scorn — and that those who were consecrated to him — as we have been, “cut off” (sacer) in order to belong to him “cum” — treated him in this way.
- How do we respond to this? In response to “most” treating him in the “sacrament of love” with indifference by missing Mass as if it makes no difference, Jesus wants us to make him wants us to treat him in the Mass as the greatest difference-maker in our life, as our true priority, as the “source and summit” of our existence, the fulcrum of our week and day. In response to “most” who treat him with irreverence, who just go through the motions or who even pray Mass poorly as if it doesn’t matter, he wants us to treat him with deep piety. In contrast to “most” who relate to him with coldness and lack of enthusiasm, who come to Mass as to fulfill an obligation rather than ardent participants, he wants us more passionate about him at the Mass than the most fanatical sports fans are during a successful playoff run. Instead of treating him with scorn, he wants us to relate to him with grateful appreciation. And rather than receiving him sacrilegiously, without being in the state of grace, he wants us to receive him with souls fully intent on holiness and cleansed of sin. Those of us who are consecrated to him have, in a sense, a duty to make reparation for all of those who treat Jesus poorly. If he feels most keenly the lack of love from those who are consecrated, then how much more consoling will be the love of those who are conscious of their special dedication. The best way we train to do so is by receiving Jesus in the Eucharist with *precedence, piety, passion, praise and purity* — in short, by treating him as he deserves.
- Practical issues
 - How do we do this?
 - The first is the attention we give to the Mass.
 - Lay people can tell when we’re a bureaucrat of the Mass or someone really in love with God. There’s a pacific ocean of difference between “saying” the Mass and “praying” the Mass. People should be able to tell that we really believe that we are holding God in our hands at the altar and when we have the awesome privilege to give God to them.
 - How well do we prepare for the Mass? Do we go from the “sheets to the linens” or do we really prepare spiritually for the Mass, stoking our hunger in prayer, immersing ourselves in the readings on which we’ll preach and connecting them to the One who said them, really celebrating with *mens concordet voci*, as Pope Benedict defined the *ars celebrandi*?
 - Do we receive Jesus’ body and blood with awe?
 - Do we “rush” the distribution of Holy Communion, as if the most important moment in human life is something that should happen as quickly and efficiently as possible?
 - Does the placement of the Lord in our sanctuaries communicate that we have God in the center of our worship? Are the tabernacles the most exquisite item in our Church, to convey this truth and love?
 - Do we encourage daily Mass and make it possible for people so that they can truly live Eucharistic lives?

- Does our love overflow on Holy Thursday with the altar of repose, on Corpus Christi?
- The second is love for the Lord in the Eucharist outside of Mass.
 - There's a very popular new book called *The Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle*, featuring the writings and life of St. Manuel Gonzalez Garcia, the bishop of Malaga and later Palencia Spain last century and the founder of the Eucharistic Missionaries of Nazaret. He was canonized by Pope Francis in 2016.
 - Soon after his ordination in 1901, he was sent for his first assignment, in the parish of Palomares del Rio, traveling by boat and then donkey. He didn't know much about the parish but was hoping to find a Church full of fervor. He soon discovered from the sacristan who had come to meet him that almost no one came to Mass, in which politics had taken over the town and the former priest couldn't visit anyone without rumors of political allegiances, children were kept away because they made too much noise. But his biggest shock was when he entered the Church. It was very dirty and looked almost abandoned. He went to the tabernacle and found it covered in dust and cobwebs. The altar cloths were torn and burnt. Oil was dripping from the sanctuary lamp onto the floor. He knelt down before the tabernacle asking for the Lord's help, guidance and courage. He later wrote, "My faith was looking at Jesus through the door of that tabernacle, so silent, so patient, so good, gazing right back at me. ... His gaze was telling me much and asking me for more. It was a gaze in which all the sadness of the Gospels was reflected; the sadness of 'no room in the inn'; the sadness of those words, 'Do you also want to leave me?'; the sadness of poor Lazarus begging for crumbs from the rich man's table; the sadness of the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter, of the soldier's slap, of the spittle in the Praetorium and the abandonment of all. All of this sadness was there in the tabernacle, oppressing and crushing the sweet Heart of Jesus and drawing bitter tears from his eyes. Blessed tears from those eyes! The gaze of Jesus in that tabernacle was a gaze that pierced the soul, and one can never forget it. I was trying not to cry, so as not to make Jesus even more sad. His gaze expressed the sorrow of One who loves, but who does not find anybody who wants to receive that love. For me this turned out to be the starting point — to see, understand and feel what would consume the whole of my priestly ministry. On that afternoon, in that moment in which I was before the tabernacle, I saw that my priesthood would consist of a work of which I had never before dreamed. All my illusions about the kind of priest I would be vanished. I found myself to be a priest in a town that didn't love Jesus and I would have to love him in the name of everybody in that town. I would dedicate my priesthood to taking care of Jesus in the needs of his life in the tabernacle: to feed him with my love, to keep him warm with my presence, to entertain him with my conversations, to defend him against abandonment and ingratitude, to give relief to his Heart with my holy sacrifices, to serve him with my feet by taking him wherever he is desired, and with my hands by giving alms in his name, even to those who do not love him, and with my mouth, by speaking of him and consoling others in his name, and by crying out to those who do not want to hear him, until finally they would listen and begin to follow him. This would be a beautiful priesthood!"
 - Commenting about the tabernacle he found, he said, "What did that tabernacle teach me? I do not think that our religion could ever have a more powerful stimulus for gratitude, or a more efficient principle of love, or a stronger motivation for action than that abandoned tabernacle. Perhaps a weak faith would be scandalized by it, but a faith that meditates and a heart that searches deeply will discover in that tabernacle the Heart of Jesus, who remains there accompanied by only the cobwebs. He stays there day and night, year after year, without ever leaving that tabernacle. He continues to send the sun in the morning, his water to quench our thirst, and bread to feed us, as well as strength and life to all those people who treat him so badly."

- Before he died on January 4, 1940, he said: “I ask to be buried next to the tabernacle, so that my bones, after death, as my tongue and my pen during life, can say to those who pass by: Jesus is there! There he is! Do not leave him abandoned!”
- It’s a very powerful story of a priest, then a bishop, who took seriously the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, who lived a truly Eucharistic life, who even in death wanted to proclaim his faith in the wonder of God in the Blessed Sacrament. He spent hours praying before the Lord and founding the Union for Eucharistic Reparation. And he bore fruit, even during the Spanish Civil War in which he had much to suffer.
- I’m confident that none of our tabernacles are full of cobwebs, but are our tabernacles abandoned most of the day? Is Jesus in the Tabernacle abandoned by us priests or do we make time to go to be with him?
- Jesus wants to speak to us from that tabernacle like he spoke to St. Manuel Gonzalez Garcia. He wants to be with us, to love us, to illumine us, to inflame us, to console us, to reinvigorate us, to give himself to us and receive our self-gift in return. Through time with him in the Blessed Sacrament, he wants to teach us to pray, he wants to bring our prayers to the Father, he wants to help us to become men, models and master-teachers of prayer so that we can in turn guide others along the path of prayer.
- It’s there, in front of him, that he wants to revitalize the Church.
- I’m not sure if you have had the chance to read the book published four years ago by Angelico Press, *In Sinu Iesu: When Heart Speaks to Heart — The Journal of a Priest at Prayer*. It details what the Lord has communicated to an anonymous Benedictine priest from October 3, 2007 through June 2, 2016. The title *In Sinu Iesu* comes from the Latin Vulgate of how St. John reclined during the Last Supper “on Jesus’ breast” (Jn 13:23). This priest’s journal, in which he humbly and plausibly claims to have regularly heard Jesus and Mary speaking to him, reminds us that Jesus desires to have an intimate heart-to-heart relationship with all of his beloved disciples, but especially with his priests. Throughout its 308 pages, Jesus and Mary — and also on rarer occasions God the Father and a few saints — cover many fundamental aspects of the Christian spiritual life in such a profound, direct and moving way that it’s the most compelling text of spiritual reading I’ve read in the last several years.
- The book tackles straight on what Jesus communicates to his interlocutor about the roots of the priestly scandals and what God is asking the clergy and all the faithful to do in response.
- “All of heaven weeps over the sins of my priests,” Jesus states, which are a “grievous affront to my own priesthood,” adding, “Every time a priest sins, he sins directly against me and against the most Holy Eucharist toward which his whole being is ordered. When a priest approaches my altar laden with sins that have not been confessed or for which he has not repented, my angels look on with horror, my mother grieves, and I am again wounded in my hands and my feet and in my heart.” Would we expect any less?
- Jesus’ desire, however, is not to condemn but to convert: “I am about to renew the priesthood of my Church in holiness. I am very close to cleansing my priests of the impurities that defile them. Soon, very soon, I will pour out graces of spiritual healing upon all my priests. I will separate those who will accept the gift of my divine friendship from those who will harden their hearts against me.” He emphasizes about the latter what we now all know: “Those who do not live in my friendship betray me and impede my work. They detract from the beauty of holiness that I would see shine in my Church.”
- The root of priestly sins, Jesus says, is the “loneliness” that comes from a lack of friendship with him. Jesus desires to be the friend each priest needs, “the Friend with whom they can share everything, the Friend to whom they can tell everything, the Friend who will weep over their sins without, for a moment, ceasing to love them.” He laments, “If priests lived in my friendship, how different my Church would be! ... Many of the sufferings and hardships experienced with my Church at the hands of her ministers, my priests, would not exist.” The lack of “experiential knowledge of my friendship and love,” Jesus continues, “is the root of the evil that eats away at the priesthood from within.”

- This lack of friendship, he says, is seen in the “coldness and indifference” with which priests approach Jesus in the Eucharist. “There are priests who go into my church only when they have a function to perform.” They receive little from their daily communion “because they expect so little.” He adds sorrowfully, “Even after two thousand years of Eucharistic presence in my Church, I remain unknown, forgotten, forsaken, and treated like a thing to be kept here or there.” Priests, moreover, “keep themselves apart from me. Their lives are compartmentalized. They treat with me only when duty obliges them to do so.” And because of loneliness, they look for love “in other places and in creatures unworthy of the undivided love of their consecrated hearts,” as they try to “fill the emptiness within with vain pursuits, with lust, with possessions, with food and drink.”
- What’s the remedy? The sins of my priests call for reparation,” Jesus declares. The particular reparation he implores is Eucharistic adoration. “The renewal of my priesthood in the Church will proceed from a great return to the adoration of my real presence in this the Sacrament of my love. ... This is the remedy for the evil that has so disfigured my holy priesthood in the Church.” He underlines, “I want priest adorers and repairers,” “priests who will adore for priests who do not adore, priests who will make reparation for priests who do not make reparation for themselves or for others.” He says that priests “will be renewed in holiness and purity when they begin to seek me out in the Sacrament of my love,” meaning the Eucharist.
- Time with Christ in prayerful adoration develops that friendship that is the source of true priestly life. “The secret of priestly holiness,” Jesus states, is “a life of friendship with me, a ‘yes’ renewed each day to the gift of divine friendship that I offer each priest.” This is where priests learn to identify “with all my interests, with all my sorrows, with all that offends me, and ... with my burning zeal for the glory of my Father and for the holiness of all my people.” He adds, “All the rest is secondary.”
- To enter into friendship with Jesus means to enter, he notes, into a “privileged and sweet relationship with my Mother,” imitating the relationship both St. Joseph and St. John had with her. “The great renewal of the priesthood in my Church will begin when priests understand that I want them to live in the company of my Immaculate Mother.” He wants us to pray each day the Rosary and the *Ave Maria Stella* and to entrust our lives and needs to her, both big and small.
- The reform also involves, he says, embracing the purifying fire of love of the Holy Spirit in very practical ways: “I will pour out the Holy Spirit upon all priests in the form of a purifying fire. Those who welcome that fire will emerge from it like gold from the furnace, shining with holiness and with a wonderful purity for all to see. Those who refuse my fire will be consumed by it.”
- Living by the fire of the Holy Spirit means demanding that priests strive for holiness. “There has never been in all of history a single priest whom I have not destined for a great holiness,” Jesus says. “A holy priest is quite simply one who allows me to live in him,” and for this reason, “I offer them my presence in the Eucharist. Yes, this is the great secret of priestly holiness.” So many of the problems in the clergy and in the Church have come from priests’ lowering the bar for themselves and everyone else.
- To grow in holiness, Jesus says he wants priests to “go to confession weekly,” to meditate each Thursday on chapters 13-17 of the Gospel of St. John, preferably together with adoration, and to grow in the exercise of spiritual fatherhood based on trust in God’s Fatherhood. “The fatherhood of the priest is a grace that I shall renew in the Church now,” because the Church “suffers in that so many priests do not know how to live the grace of their fatherhood,” abandoning souls to “live like spiritual orphans.” Jesus says to his Benedictine dialogue partner and through him to all priests, “Be a father.”
- Finally Jesus encourages the prayer of what he calls the “Chaplet of Reparation” or the “Offering of the Precious Blood for Priests.” Like the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, it is prayed on ordinary Rosary beads. On the ‘Our Father’ beads, we say, “Eternal Father, I offer you the Precious Blood of your Beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb without blemish

or spot, in reparation for my sins and for the sins of all your priests;” on the ten ‘Hail Mary’ beads, “By your Precious Blood, O Jesus, purify and sanctify your priests;” and at the end of each decade, “O Father, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named, have mercy on all your priests and wash them in the Blood of the Lamb.” What a beautiful prayer to say for the renewal of the clergy!

- What I’ve shared are just a few coins of the enormous treasure contained in *In Sinu Iesu*. I would urge you to immerse yourself in it. It points the way to how priests can understand what they are doing, imitate what they celebrate and conform their life to the Mystery of the Lord’s Cross.
- It also indicates how huge a priority it is for us to make it possible for our people to come to adore Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.
- Preaching the Eucharist
 - Fr. Peter John Cameron, finishing every homily with a reference to the Eucharist.
 - If we’re really preaching Jesus in the homily, then the connection should be easy.
 - We can’t take for granted that people know what we know. We need to emphasize it every way we can and allow the Holy Spirit, through us, to draw them like St. John to Jesus’ breast for a heart to heart.
 - St. John Vianney:
 - When he would speak on the holy Eucharist, he often could not achieve words and would speak only in tears. He spoke often of the real presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist and he did it with so much conviction that the words went straight to the soul. Sometimes he couldn’t breathe and he remained as if he was in suspense. He eyes would tear up when he spoke about this gift of Jesus.
 - He would often only be able to point to the tabernacle and repeat, “He is there!”
 - “Attending Mass is the greatest action we can do.”
 - “All the good works taken together do not equal the sacrifice of the Mass, because they are the works of men and the holy Mass is the work of God. The martyr is nothing in comparison, because martyrdom is the sacrifice that man makes to God of his life; the Mass is the sacrifice that God makes for man of his body and blood.”
 - “You could give 2,000, 3,000 or 100,000 francs, but you would not be able to pay for one Mass: the price is the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ!”
 - “If one were to say, ‘At such a time, one is going to raise a dead man,’ we would all quickly run to see it. But the consecration, isn’t it a greater miracle than raising a dead man?”
 - “How beautiful it is. After the consecration, the good God is there, like he is in heaven. If man knew this mystery, he would die of love.”
 - “If we had had one favor to ask of Our Lord, we would never have thought to ask him that!”
 - “What is our Lord doing in the tabernacle? He is awaiting us!”
 - “Next to this sacrament, we are like someone who dies of hunger next to a river, just needing to bend the head down to drink; or like a poor man next to a treasure chest, when all that is needed is to stretch out the hand.”
 - “O man, how happy you are, but you comprehend so little your happiness! If you were to understand it, you would not be able to live... You would die of love! God gives himself to you. You can carry him if you want, wherever you want. He makes himself one with you!”
 - “Our soul is so precious in the eyes of God that, in his wisdom, he didn’t find nourishment worthy enough for it except his adorable body, which he made our daily bread.”
 - “Come to communion, come to Jesus, come to live of him, in order to live for him.”

- “By one communion, we give God more glory than if you were to give 100,000 francs to the poor.”
- *Il est là!*
- Uniting Life to the Mass
 - St. Josemaria would celebrate Mass generally at 7 am, then he would give thanks through noon and from noon onward he would prepare for Mass the following day.
 - Everything that occurred he would seek to unite to the Mass.
 - Our Christian life is meant to be a commentary on the words of consecration, that we give our body, our blood, our sweat, out of love for God and others.
 - When we’re having a rough time, it’s key for us to remember that we have received God and that we don’t face it alone. If he loved us enough to give everything to give us himself, then we can have confidence that whatever problem we’re facing we can confront with confidence. If God didn’t even spare his own son by hands him over for us all each day, would he not give us everything else besides?
 - We draw our strength from communion. We live as extremely blessed human beings.
- Conclusion
 - I ponder a lot the Eucharistic hymns of St. Thomas Aquinas. They’ve had an enormous impact on me and the way that I approach the Holy Eucharist. I love the Adoro Te Devote in which we confess that we believe anything the Son of God has said, because nothing is truer than the word of truth. I love the Sacris Solemnis in which we focus on those words, “O mind-blowing reality! A poor and humble servant eats the Lord!” I love the Pange Lingua Gloriosi in which we’re able to give God thanks for the Tantum Sacramentum, the so great a sacrament as well as the Verbum Supernum in which we sing to the Salutaris Hostia, the Saving Victim, begging him to give us strength and assistance. But the most powerful line of all for me comes from the Lauda Sion, the sequence for Corpus Christi. In the second verse we sing, “Quantum potes, tantum aude: quia maior omni laude nec laudare sufficis.” Which means, “Whatever you can do, dare to do, for the reality is so much greater than all the praise you can ever muster.” Dare to do all you can in thanksgiving. Dare to do all you can in celebration. Dare to do all you can in prayerful adoration. Dare to do all you can to get others to love the Lord and treat him as he deserves.
 - The Lord Jesus who called us apart from the crowds to be with him today to that he might refresh us by yoking ourselves to him offers us that opportunity each day in the Mass, in Eucharistic prayer and adoration, and in the communion of life and love that flows from our holy communion with him. Our in persona Christi celebration of the Sacraments is meant to help us live with Christ and act in communion with him throughout the day.
 - We thank him today for calling us to be Christians. We thank him for all the times he has fed us with himself over the course of our life. We thank him for the vocations he has given us as priests and for the awesome privilege he has bestowed for us to celebrate Mass, bring about the incarnation of the Son of God in our hands, and give him to a world that hungers for him, even if they don’t come close to grasping the immensity of the gift.
 - Jesus wants to revitalize his Church and that reinvigoration, that reform, begins with him in the Holy Eucharist. This is his gift for the life of the world. Let us ask him for the grace to dare to do all we can, to cooperate fully with his desires so that through our Eucharistic love for him he can unleash his redeeming love for those he has entrusted to us and the whole world.