

The Sixth Sunday of Easter/Year A 2017/Catholic
Charities Follow-up In-Pew Appeal; Coffee and Donuts
(Youth/Steubenville) Sunday

~ 20/21 May 2017

Our Lady of Victory Parish Community
Homily

1st Reading:

Acts 8:5-8; 14-17

- " when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit "

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 66 - *Sung*

2nd Reading:

1 Peter 3:15-18

- "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence for it is better to suffer for doing good, if that be the will of God, than for doing evil."

GOSPEL:

JOHN 14:15-21

- "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him."

i. The Scriptures this weekend, beginning with the Gospel, are filled with not only laying the groundwork for when Jesus would no longer be **physically** present in his human form . . . but provide a snapshot of the community of believers . . . the Church . . . coming into existence and taking hold through the gift of the Spirit. As always . . . they connect us to what was . . . what is . . . and what is yet to be in a mysterious, but no less, real way . . . as does this very gathering, week after week . . . this gathering we call **Mass** . . . the celebration of the **Eucharist** . . . **Liturgy** . . . for this gathering serves to connect us to all who have come before us . . . to all here present and throughout the world . . . and to all who will come after us . . . but also, even more mysteriously, to the God who has called us together . . . to Christ, His Son . . . and all under the watchful care of the Spirit who remains with us.

A significant element of this gathering is, in fact, the Homily, the function of which, based on the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, the introduction to the *Lectionary for Mass* along with other Church documents that guide our liturgical life is: **integral** to the Liturgy of the Word, which we are still engaged in . . . in which Christ is present . . . to be an **explanation** of some aspect of the readings or other text from the Mass itself . . . to consider the **mystery** of what we are celebrating and show **awareness**, when possible, of the particular needs of those

present. It is also, very much intended, to be a “bridge” that connects our action of Gathering . . . and the Liturgy of the Word . . . with the Liturgy of, in this case, the Eucharist.

Beginning this week . . . and continuing on for a few additional weeks . . . it is my hope and intention to focus on the **mystery** of what we are celebrating . . . **Why** we do **what** we do . . . and perhaps even become a “bridge” for the action we enter into, week after week after week.

For some . . . this may be “old information” . . . for others, “new information” and still others, “unnecessary information” . . . but, I would ask that . . . as the Liturgy calls for from all who gather . . . that with open hearts and minds, each of us give it a hearing . . . for who knows what you might hear.

Three other important points first, before continuing on:

- *Story of how the “Revised” Roman Missal – Third Edition even came to be – re: Saint John Paul II – if not true, should be . .*

- Anyone here who has or presently is involved in coaching a sport . . . any group sport I presume, that as is the case with most group sports . . . you have a “Play Book” . . . either written or in your head . . . and that each

time your players come together . . . you “take” from that play book what you need to engage in the sport . . . The **Church** has provided a few play books for the **work** we do in the Mass . . . because Liturgy is very much the action of God and the work of the people . . . Primary among these “liturgical play books” is the “Missal” . . . that “Red Book” that, while I and other priests may not be using it every minute of the time we are all together . . . contains in it the clear and specific guides for **how** we are to lead . . . the **what** of what we do . . . the **when** of doing it . . . and the **where** it is to be done along with the **how** . . . as well as the **who** is to carry out various parts of this **Mass** . . .

- And, because the Church has not only seen fit to equip us with this “Play Book”, but also recognizes her responsibility to do so . . . and, has also experienced times when some have introduced “adaptations” . . . whether that was to omit or add or change actions, elements, words or other various adaptations **NOT** specifically permitted . . . the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments published an ***Instruction*** in 2004, and approved by Saint John Paul II, its English title being, “***On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist***”, made clear just **who**, in the Church, is, as well as who is “not”, permitted to introduce “adaptations” to the Liturgy and more specifically, just what those adaptations may and may not

be.

I will tell you, my name was not on the list of “who may” introduce adaptations.

II. So . . . let’s begin . . . at the beginning . . .

Perhaps, there are those who think that the “beginning” is when the lights go on full and some familiar voice utters the words, “Please join in singing our Entrance Chant . . .”. **Not so.**

The real “beginning” for this gathering started when each person here had it in their mind that they would be **here** . . . at **this** time . . . in **this** place . . . and it was **God** who **issued** the invitation . . . or better yet . . . God who **convoked** this gathering . . . God who **called** us to gather . . .

If this were a morning Mass, for example, perhaps another person in the house yelled something like, “Are you ready yet? We need to get to Church!” . . . but even before that “call” . . . it was **God** who invited . . . and each person’s presence here is the first of several responses of “O.K. . . . yes”, that we give back to God.

O.K. . . . so we’re here . . . each with our own needs,

wants, distractions, concerns . . . all sorts of things going on in our heads . . . which is why the Church sees fit to provide some **clear** signal to enter into what is about to unfold . . . to help us not only focus, as individuals, on what it is we are entering into, but also, to come together to begin to form a “communion” of persons . . . persons called together by God for a particular purpose . . . but also to remind us that it is here . . . **here** . . . in **this** place . . . at **this** time . . . that God is **very** present . . . that the Lord **will**, in fact, **speak** in and through His Word **proclaimed** and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, **become** for **us** His very Body and Blood that we so desperately need.

Consider for a moment . . . if any of us were to attend an Akron Rubber Ducks game . . . a Cleveland Indians Game . . . a Cavaliers Game . . . we’d be talking and laughing and joking and eating and drinking until the game began . . . perhaps, even into the first pitch or coin toss . . . unless . . . **unless** . . . someone got our attention . . . and once they do . . . over the sound system . . . there are a few other things that take place . . . to get us into “game-playing-mind” . . . and help us focus on the action . . .

Among those things might be introducing the starting line-up of players . . . other dignitaries present . . . and then, one more thing . . . an invitation for all to stand and sing the “Star Spangled Banner” . . .

And you do . . . thousands do . . . instinctively . . . placing your right hand over your heart . . . finding the American Flag so that you have a visual connection . . . and all join in . . . **same** posture . . . **same** song . . . **same** words . . . all join in and become a mass of sports fans . . .

Well . . . the Church . . . once we have gathered and in what we label “**The Introductory Rites**” . . . provides a way for us, in action, to not only respond to God’s call to gather . . . but to focus our minds and hearts on Christ, in our midst . . . and to start to become that communion of members . . . that **Mass of worshippers** . . . gathered together in friendliness and hospitality . . . for a specific work and purpose.

What we do Sunday after Sunday, as found in our “Play-Book”, the *Missal* . . . didn’t necessarily start out in the way we experience it today . . . but over the centuries, our brothers and sisters who have preceded us . . . guided by the Spirit and in their passion and desire to worship God, in Christ and through the Spirit in a worthy manner . . . **they** have handed on to us so many of the elements we experience today in our celebration of Mass.

Yes, there is **more** . . . **more** not only about the **Mass** and its various elements, but also **more** about why these elements are included in the **Introductory Rites** as well as

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what meaning they hold for us . . . but, that will continue next week.

As time permits . . . a version of this will also take written form to be published either as part of the Bulletin or in other ways . . . so, stay tuned.