

Eleventh Sunday Per Annum (B)
June 14, 2015.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name (Ps. 92).

Our celebration of the Paschal Mystery in all its detail was completed in a sense, with the beautiful Feast of *Corpus Christi*, celebrated last Sunday and with the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, celebrated this past Friday. In the Sacred Heart of Jesus, wounded for our sins we have a summary of our whole faith and the path of our discipleship. We live our life in Christ endeavouring to be conformed to the Heart of Our Saviour. The pierced and wounded Heart of Our Lord is not unlike the hearts of many men and women and yes, sadly, even of children; broken by man's cruelty. This wound, our own and Our Lord's is easily a point of access into the depth of one's being, an opportunity both to sympathize and empathize with others in what can be a profoundly intimate experience of human solidarity. It is precisely this capacity which enables us to become more authentically human after the pattern of Our Lord Jesus Christ and truly merciful according to His Most Sacred Heart. In the account of Our Lord's Crucifixion and the wounding of His Sacred Heart, St. John writes: *But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.... These things occurred so that the Scripture might be fulfilled.... 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced' (Jn. 19:34-37).*

This prophecy of Zechariah (12:10), is fulfilled each and every time the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered for we also *look on the one whom they have pierced*. In the cycle of the liturgical year we now resume what is sometimes referred to as Ordinary Time or more correctly, Time through the Year (*Tempus Per Annum*). The truth of course, is that there is absolutely nothing ordinary about what we do here in this church; Sunday after Sunday, day after day, no matter the liturgical season. The Mass is the highest act of worship and for this reason it is the highest exercise of the virtue of religion; as the very word (*religio*) indicates: religion binds us back to God.

St. Thomas Aquinas states that *religion is the assertion of faith, hope and charity, whereby man is primarily directed to God (ST II-II, q. 101, a. 3, ad 1)*. He also teaches that *one must first of all acknowledge God with a view to worship, before honouring Him whom we have acknowledged (ST II-II, q. 122, a. 3)*. What this means effectively, is that in the practice of religion, especially as this is expressed in our worship, our fundamental disposition should primarily be one of adoration. The four ends of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass are: adoration, atonement, thanksgiving and petition. Last Sunday, as we celebrated the Mystery of Our Lord's Eucharistic Presence in the Feast of *Corpus Christi*, we noted that we who participate in the offering at the Altar participate in the heavenly offering of Christ our Lord who has suffered for us. Thus the Mass takes us up to Heaven and for this reason, when the Mass is celebrated with reverence, love and devotion it truly becomes *the most beautiful thing this side of Heaven*. When we receive Holy Communion we are as it were, re-located at the throne of the Lamb; and this is no less true of Eucharistic adoration.

This is why St. Thomas Aquinas spoke of the Eucharist as the pledge of our future glory (*pignus future gloriae*). We who participate in the earthly offering and who receive Holy Communion are

divinized though not fully yet as when we will see God in the Beatific Vision. It is in the liturgy that we understand our true nature and purpose. In a world so obviously confused about the nature and purpose of human life, the sacred liturgy rightly celebrated is a most effective tool of evangelization. In the sacred liturgy it is our Lord Himself who speaks to us and whose grace is at work in and through us, perfecting our nature and transforming it so that it might participate in the very life of God Himself.

There is nothing more important than the liturgy for as the Second Vatican Council teaches us, *it is in the liturgy, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, that 'the work of the redemption is accomplished', and it is through the liturgy especially that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 2)*. For all of us who are present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass what matters most is the interior disposition that each one of us brings to this sacred action. *The kind of understanding that really matters at Mass is attainable by every faithful soul who sets foot in a **real** Church with a **sacred** liturgy: it is an intuition of the mystery of the Word-made-flesh, made food for us; the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Calvary, present in our midst* (Peter Kwasniewski, *Resurgent in the Midst of Crisis*, p. 28).

I am convinced that the many who no longer attend Holy Mass with any regularity have either forgotten the truths about the Mass or because of faulty catechesis were never taught what the Mass truly is. This is no less true of priests, sadly. For this reason I would like to recommend to you a beautiful book that in great detail outlines the history and significance of the ceremonies of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The title of the book is: *Treasure and Tradition*.¹ It is a guide designed to open up the riches contained within the Mass to all. Later this summer, when our Gospel readings will be taken from the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St. John, Our Lord's Eucharistic discourse, our Sunday homilies will be a liturgical catechesis on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Please God, all of us will benefit from these meditations on the Mass, *the most beautiful thing this side of Heaven*, where we *look on the one whom they have pierced (Jn. 19:34-37)*; so that, *with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, [we may be] changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor. 3:18)*. This is practically speaking, as it concerns our life, the purpose and effect of every Mass; and for this reason, *it is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to [His] name (Ps. 92)*.

¹ (http://staugustineacademypress.com/epages/b9279dcf-f5d4-4322-8442-90642f0120ca.sf/en_US/?ObjectPath=/Shops/b9279dcf-f5d4-4322-8442-90642f0120ca/Products/639366).