

From The Pastor

As mentioned, this weekend is our annual Missionary Appeal. Once a year, each parish in the diocese is asked to host an appeal in support of the missions. Various religious congregations working near and far to promote the gospel share their stories of ministry among God's people. This missionary outreach depends on the support of the larger Church to sustain not only the pastoral ministries offered, but often to sustain the basic needs of the missionaries themselves.

This year, Brother Robert Carnaghi FSC, will make an appeal on behalf of the De La Salle Christian Brothers. The basic charism and ministry of the Christian Brothers is Christian education. Founded in France in 1680 by St. John Baptist De La Salle, the congregation now conducts nearly six- thousand schools in eighty-five countries around the world. Their origins in Detroit began in 1851 when they lead the school at St. Anne's French Church. Currently, the only school in the Archdiocese run by the Christian Brothers is De La Salle Collegiate, which remains a generous source of vocations for the congregation.

Thank you for your attention and response to this annual appeal in support of the good work of many to promote and spread the gospel of Christ.

As the academic year ends for many schools, I offer hearty congratulations to all graduates of every level of education. Education is a tremendous gift we should never take for granted. In the tedium of our studies, we may often wonder 'when will I ever use this'. Nonetheless, the successful completion of a course of study not only affords the individual a body of knowledge, but also the gift of self-discovery and maturity, the formation of life dreams, and the realization of inner desires and potential. More than a degree through which a person may make a living, the gift of education is the gift of offering yourself with all your talents and convictions to a world sorely in need of disciplined minds, and hearts formed with virtue and character.

Many blessings to all who have passed a milestone in their education. May the Lord put light on your path, and shine brightly on your future. May the summer prove to be a safe and productive time for all students. Bless yourself with meaningful reading and a time for daily prayer as you enjoy the summer recess.

Today celebrates the Feast of Corpus Christi; The Body and the Blood of Christ. In 1264, Pope Urban IV named the feast for the universal Church after many intense devotions grew up in many parts of the world. Drawing on the predominant themes of Holy Thursday, the feast is a wonderful and powerful reminder of intimate love that God reveals in and through the person of Jesus. Given the frequency of our reception today, we are challenged to give full attention and awareness to the mystery of love given to us in this wonderful Sacrament.

This year the predominant theme is that of blood. In the Old Testament, blood held two essential meanings: life and sacrifice. Blood is the life and vitality of an animal or a person. In religious ritual, blood was used to confirm covenants and make atonement for sins. The sacrifice of a goat or bull or lamb, first drained of its blood in reverence for its life, was offered in sacrifice as a form of worship and atonement.

Clearly, we now see that the blood of bulls, and goats, and lambs are not able to atone for sins. Now we have a perfect sacrifice in the person and life of God himself, in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the perfect unblemished lamb of sacrifice who takes away the sins of the world. Why is this sacrifice effective? Because Jesus is the Lamb of God. God offers himself in the person of his Son to atone for our sins through the One who is worthy and able. Jesus freely choose to give his life for us so that the life of God might live in us.

In Hebrew, body is another way of saying person or self. Blood means life. God shares and offers for us the divine person and life of Jesus to confirm the covenant relationship we are to have with our Creator. When we eat his Body and drink his Blood, we share in and receive the person and the life of God within ourselves.

In so many ways, the Eucharist is the essence of our life in God. Yet it is more than receiving Holy Communion. When we drink the Blood of Christ, we accept the forgiveness of our sins and the communion we share with God. In so doing, we then become for one another the Body (person) of Christ. To drink his Blood is to become one with the person and life that is Jesus. This gives Jesus great joy and fulfills his desire to be one with us. It also gives us the challenge to live and act as Christ. More than a religious ritual or spiritual symbol, we are literally and actually in our bodies and in our lives the living presence of Christ. This is the divine purpose and intention for us. What a gift. What a great God we have. Let us reflect and represent God well to one another by the way we love and give ourselves in service. Become more and more what you receive: the person and the life of Christ for others.

Father John Esper