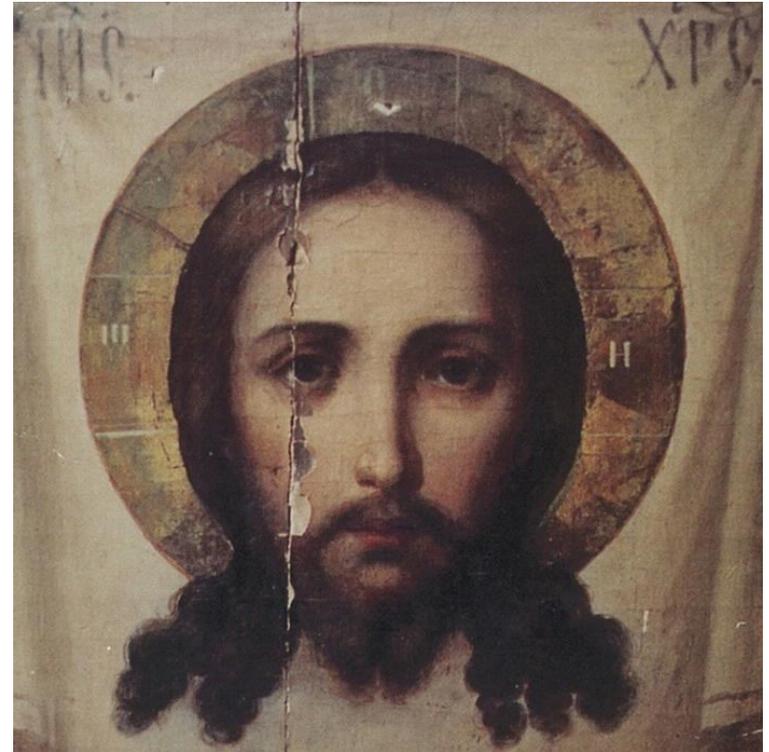


Link to Liturgy



3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time The Gift of Self

Link to Liturgy provides faithful resources which use the latest audiovisual means alongside traditional means to evangelize & catechize thus linking life to the Gospel & the Gospel to life. Sign up Free to Link to Liturgy.



Lessons and Discussions

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“He called them, and immediately they left”

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“the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light”

Page 15– We are a Gift!

“Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men”

Entrance Antiphon (Matthew 4:18-19) – Roman Missal

Should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred. Another song can be substituted, but should have the same theme; this should not be the norm.

*Dominus secus mare**Mt 4: 18, 19*

T HE Lord, walking by the sea of Gal-i-lee, * saw
two brothers, Peter and Andrew, and he called out to
them: Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Alternate options:Hymns

Be Thou My Vision

Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation

O Worship the King

Praise to the Lord

Praise Songs

Marvelous Light (Charlie Hall)

As it is in Heaven (Matt Maher)

Remnant

Cool or Holy

Crossroads

Collect – Roman Missal

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

Almighty ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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

Gospel Reading – Matthew 4:12-23 – Roman Missal

NOTE: *In the Roman Catholic Tridentine Lectionary this Gospel
4th Sunday after Pentecost (Luke 5:1-11)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
- Glory to you O Lord

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled.

Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen.

From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the Son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.

He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people.

The Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings (Third Sunday in Ordinary Time)

From the constitution on the sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council

Christ is always present to his Church, especially in the actions of the liturgy. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, in the person of the minister (it is the same Christ who formerly offered Himself on the cross that now offers by the ministry of priests) and most of all under the Eucharistic species. He is present in the sacraments by His power, in such a way that when someone baptizes, Christ Himself baptizes. He is present in His word, for it is He Himself who speaks when the Holy Scriptures are read in the Church. Finally, He is present when the Church prays and sings, for He himself promised: Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in their midst.

Indeed, in this great work which gives perfect glory to God and brings holiness to men, Christ is always joining in partnership with Himself, His beloved Bride, the Church, which calls upon its Lord and through Him gives worship to the eternal Father.

It is therefore right to see the liturgy as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ, in which through signs addressed to the senses man's sanctification is signified and, in a way proper to each of these signs, made effective, and in which public worship is celebrated in its fullness by the mystical body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the head and by His members.

Responsory – Office of Readings – (Third Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Christ prays for us: He is our priest; He prays in us: He is our head; we pray to Him: He is our God
- Let us be ever aware, then, of our prayer in Him, and His prayer in us.

When we turn to God in prayer, we must not separate ourselves from his Son.

- Let us be ever aware, then, of our prayer in Him, and His prayer in us.

Give Yourself Away – Lesson and Discussion

“He called them, and immediately they left”

What is the plan of God for man? “God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. In the fullness of time, God the Father sent his Son as the Redeemer and Savior of

and Cross, be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen

“The End” Notes

- [1] Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church – Section 1
- [2] St. Gabriel Possenti
- [3] Saint Therese, the Little Flower – Story of a Soul
- [4] Psalms 141:2-4
- [5] The Order of the Mass; Eucharistic Prayer; Roman Canon
- [6] 1 Timothy 2:4
- [7] Collect in this packet
- [8] Council of Vatican II; *Gaudium et Spes*, 24
- [9] The Order of the Mass; Eucharistic Prayer
- [10] Venerable John Paul II; Homily at World Youth Day, Tor Vergata, Sunday 20 August 2000
- [11] J.H. Newman, *Meditations on Christian Doctrine*, page 365
- [12] 1 Peter 2:9
- [13] Romans 12:1
- [14] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gardium*, Section 2
- [15] 1 Peter 5:8-9 (Sunday Compline; Divine Office)
- [16] John 8:44
- [17] Matthew 5:48
- [18] Act of Contrition
- [19] Matthew 5:8
- [20] Romans 12:1
- [21] 1 Peter 2:5
- [22] 1 Peter 2:9
- [23] Hebrews 2:14-18
- [24] CCC quoting St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III,22,4c
- [25] John 4:23-24
- [26] Genesis 22:1-12
- [27] Pope John Paul II the Great – General Audience of February 6, 1980 – 17.5
- [28] Pope John Paul II the Great – *Centesimus Annus*; Section 39
- [29] Responsory in this Link to Liturgy packet

V
A L-ma * Redemptó-ris Ma-ter, quæ pérv- a cæ-li
 porta manes, Et stella ma-ris, succúrre cadénti súrge-
 re qui cu-rat pópu-lo: Tu quæ genu- ísti, na-tú-ra mi-
 ránte, tu-um sanctum Ge-ni-tó-rem: Virgo pri- us ac po-
 sté-ri- us, Gabri- é-lis ab o-re sumens illud Ave, pecca-
 tó-rum mi-se-ré- re.

Alma Redemptoris Mater (English Translation)

Loving mother of the Redeemer, open door to heaven and star of the sea, come quickly to the aid of thy people, fallen indeed but striving to stand again. To nature's astonishment thou wert the mother of thy holy Creator without ceasing to be a virgin, and heard from Gabriel that greeting: "Hail." Have pity on us sinners.

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
 R. And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray. Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made know by the message of an angel may, by His Passion

mankind, fallen into sin, thus calling all into his Church and, through the work of the Holy Spirit, making them adopted children and heirs of his eternal happiness." [1] In this one question alone we see the gifts that man has been given by God. These gifts are: a shared life in the goodness of God, salvation from sin through the Son of God, an invitation into the Church, adoption as a child of God through the work of the Holy Spirit, and a sharing in eternal happiness. Man has been given only gifts from God: gifts to be opened, cherished, and lived. We hear many times how children are gifts from God and this is also true of the adopted children of God. Every life is a gift from God. The Christian, to whom God has given every good thing, is called to give himself away out of love, to God first and then to man out of love of God.

We are created to give the gift of our very selves. But before we can give this gift of self, we first have to appreciate the gift of ourselves and recognize ourselves as gifts. Saint Therese's words help with this. She says that perfection consists in doing God's will, in being what He wills us to be. The Gift of Self is then being who God wills you to be and then giving that self in love to God and to others.

People often ask us what we want to be, what we want to do with our lives. The Christian who prays "Thy will be done," is asking himself what does God want me to be, what does God want me to do? For this reason Saint Benedict put the phrase "to hate one's own will" in his Rule of Life. It seems harsh to "hate one's own will," but we should indeed hate our own wills, our own desires, if they are not in union with God's Holy Will and Desire. "I will attempt day by day to break my will into pieces. I want to do God's Holy Will, not my own!" [2] With Saint Gabriel, we must break our wills into pieces first to find out what exactly it is that we want and desire, then second to see if our will conforms to the Will of God.

The four apostles, Peter, Andrew, James and John were called and they immediately left to follow Jesus. They gave themselves away immediately, without hesitation, abandoning their entire selves to God's Holy Will.

MUSIC- "Switchfoot- Daisy" - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 4:21

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4uiBwgDgs>
 Daisy, give yourself away, Lookup at the rain, The beautiful dis-

play
 Of power and surrender, Giving us today, And she gives herself
 away
 Rain, another rainy day, Comes up from the ocean, Give herself
 away
 She comes down easy, On rich and dead the same, And she
 gives herself away
 Let it go, Daisy, Let it go, Open up your fist. This fallen world,
 Doesn't hold your interest, It doesn't hold your soul Daisy, let it
 go
 Pain, give yourself a name, Call yourself contrition, Avarice of
 blame
 Giving isn't easy, Neither is the rain, When she gives herself
 away
 Daisy, why another day? Why another sunrise, Who will take the
 blame
 For all redemptive motion, And every rainy day, When he gives
 himself away

God, the author of all, teaches us the mystery of giving of self in what Saint Therese calls the “book of nature.” “Jesus deigned to teach me this mystery. He set before me the book of nature; I understood how all the flowers He has created are beautiful, how the splendor of the rose and the whiteness of the Lily do not take away the perfume of the little violet or the delightful simplicity of the daisy. I understood that if all flowers wanted to be roses, nature would lose her springtime beauty, and the fields would no longer be decked out with little wild flowers. And so it is in the world of souls, Jesus' garden. He willed to create great souls comparable to lilies and roses, but He has created smaller ones and these must be content to be daisies or violets destined to give joy to God's glances when He looks down at His feet. Perfection consists in doing His will, in being what He wills us to be. Just as the sun shines simultaneously on the tall cedars and on each little flower as though it were alone on the earth, so Our Lord is occupied particularly with each soul as though there were no others like it. And just as in nature all the seasons are arranged in such a way as to make the humblest daisy bloom on a set day, in the same way, everything works out for the good of each soul.”[3]

Why would God want us to give our self to Him? God's wants us to offer our self to Him for the same reason He wants all of creation to offer itself to Him. God as the Creator is pleased and it brings Him great joy to glance down and gaze at His creation.

[Pray the “Eternal Father” part on the Our Father beads of the Rosary]

Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ in atonement for my sins and those of the whole world.

[Pray the “For the Sake” part on the Hail Mary beads of the Rosary]

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion have mercy on us and on the whole world.

[Pray the “Holy God” part three times at the end of the chaplet]

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy on us and on the whole world.

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

Marian Antiphon – Alma Redemptoris Mater

come or is rejected? We are a gift, but many times the images that we are presented with throughout our life, may make us feel as if we are not good enough, as if we are not a gift.

TV AD – “Dove commercial - Onslaught” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 1:19

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=321Kb8pBu5>

The message at the end of this ad, says it all, “Talk to your daughter before the beauty industry does.” We are a gift of self, but so often we are told that we are not. We are lied to and tempted to be someone we are not.

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Chaplet of Divine Mercy

How can we offer God, the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus? The only way this is possible is by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Christ is always present to his Church, especially in the actions of the liturgy. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, in the person of the minister (it is the same Christ who formerly offered himself on the cross that now offers by the ministry of priests) and most of all under the Eucharistic species. Christ instituted Holy Orders and the Eucharist so that we his people could offer our self in union with His offering on the Cross. We assist the priest in this offering. The Chaplet of Divine Mercy makes no sense without the Mass, it is a connection with the Mass. “Christ prays for us: he is our priest; he prays in us: he is our head; we pray to him: he is our God.”[29] In the prayer we know that Christ is praying with us as we connect to His offering, which is a prayer. Jesus is praying in us as we pray, in particular for the salvation of the whole world, which is the mission of the Head (Jesus) and the Body (the Church). In this prayer we are also directing our prayer to God, “Eternal Father” just as Jesus directed all His prayers to God. The chaplet of Divine Mercy is a very popular devotion in the Church and is one of the youngest devotions - it has only be around since the 1930’s. The words in this prayer are the exact words of Jesus, who revealed them to Saint Faustina, a Polish Nun. You may say, chant or sing the chaplet. Remnant’s version is easy to learn, you may listen at the following link: <http://remnantband.bandcamp.com/album/chaplet-of-divine-merc>

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

God is most pleased when creation does what it was created to do. All of creation, rocks, plants and animals do what they were created to do, they have no choice. Angels and humans are given free will and must choose to be what they were created to be. God is much more pleased with the angels and humans than with the rest of creation because angels and humans have freely chosen Him. God loves us for our own sake. This means that He loves us for no other reason than for who we are. Just as God is pleased with His creation and their actions, He can also be offended by His creation and their actions when they act in a way contrary to the good. God was offended and displeased with the angels who rejected Him (Satan and the fallen angels). In the same manner, God is offended and displeased when humans freely reject Him. We do not want to be in the company of Satan and the fallen angels nor those humans who have rejected and continue to reject Him. This is why we pray in the Psalms, “Let my prayer be incense before you; my uplifted hands an evening sacrifice. Set a guard, Lord, before my mouth, a gatekeeper at my lips. Do not let my heart incline to evil, or yield to any sin.”[4]

Rather than be in the company of sinners, we strive and pray to be in the company of the Angels and Saints. We are reminded of this at each Mass when the priest prays, “To us, also, your sinful servants, who hope in your abundant mercies, graciously grant some share and fellowship with your holy Apostles and Martyrs: with John the Baptist, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia and all your Saints: admit us, we beg you, into their company, not weighing our merits, but granting us your pardon, through Christ our Lord.”[5]

Is it possible that we might not be in the company of the Saints and Angels? Yes! Heaven, our goal is our sharing in the eternal exchange of love and unity, which is the Blessed Trinity. We can be obscured and miss this goal. Sharing in the eternal exchange of love, is the good pleasure of God “who wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth.”[6] We pray to God that He, “direct our actions according to [His] good pleasure.”[7] If we were already assured of attaining heaven, we would not need to pray for it. It is important to understand that heaven is promised to us, but we must accept that promise.

Why is it easy for a flower to give itself, but hard for man to give of himself? Part of a flower’s nature, part of what it was created to do, is to give of itself. Part of human nature is to give

our self. Humans can choose to give, whereas a flower cannot. Humans have the option to freely give or not to give. A human chooses to give the gift of self. The nature of a flower is that of a flower. A flower cannot choose to give itself, it just does. The nature of a human is to think and to act, these are powers of our soul. A flower gives to God according to its nature; we too should give to God according to our nature and thus offer our thoughts and actions to Him. Due to the original sin, man's nature has suffered a double darkness, an obscurity of sin and ignorance. Our minds have been darkened. This ignorance affects our ability to think well. Our will has been weakened, which affects our ability to act well, and thus we fall into sin. Our human nature is good, but fallen, and thus Christ gives us grace to aid and redeem our fallen nature.

What is the reward of giving of one's self? Unlike the flower that grows, blossoms, and then wilts away, our soul is everlasting. When we give the gift of self, we are able to reap the rewards for all eternity in Heaven. On the contrary, if we do not give the gift of self, we will reap the punishments for all eternity in Hell.

Why does God give humans the choice to give the gift of self? "Man cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself." [8] It is in giving our self away that we find our self. One reason that God gave humans the choice to give the gift of self is so that each person can begin to understand that they truly are a gift in and of themselves. Another reason God gave humans the choice to give the gift of self, is because humans have free will. God wants us, but he will not take us by force, rather He desires that we freely give our self to Him.

What does perfection consist of? What makes you perfect, in the eyes of the world, the eyes of Christ? As Saint Therese says, "Perfection consists in doing His will, in being what He wills us to be." The world needs us, but not just us. The world needs us in union with Christ. The world should not just see us, but Christ in us, and what we are through Christ, with Christ and in Christ. Each time we hear this prayer "Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever" [9] we should remember that Christ lives in us and we are a new creation, a new man in Christ.

Pope John Paul II challenged the youth as they entered the new millennium to be Christ-bearers, to carry Christ into the world.

back to seeing the family as the sanctuary of life. The family is indeed sacred: it is the place in which life – the gift of God – can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth. In the fact of the so-called culture of death, the family is the heart of the culture of life." [28]

In Genesis, the woman is born from the side of the man. Similarly, the Church is born from the pierced side of our Crucified Lord, a birth coming forth from the waters of Baptism and the blood of sacrificial love. The fruit of the Son's gift of self is the Church, which is given by the Son (His gift of self on the Cross), accepted by the Father, and confirmed by the Holy Spirit.

If we look at Adam as Christ and Eve as the Church, we see the following. There is an acceptance of the Church by Christ. The Church, by giving herself, at the same time discovers herself, thanks to the fact that she has been accepted, welcomed and received by Christ. The Church finds herself in her own gift of self, a gift that comes from the Father, through the Son and confirmed by the Holy Spirit and then is given back. Each person is "born again" from the blood and water. Each person is incorporated in the Body of Christ the Church and gives his or herself (the gift of self) to the Father. It is the role of the Church who has been accepted, welcomed and received by Christ, to give itself to the world.

How does God continue to give / reveal, the "gift of our self" to us each day? How do we continue to give, thank God for the "gift of our self" each day? With every act of giving, there is the one who gives and the one who receives. God gives and we receive the gift of our self. **Do we accept the gift of our self? In what ways do we complain and how often do we complain about "the gift of our self," what we are not, rather than "the gift of self" what we are?**

What does the receiver's acceptance, welcome and reception of our gift do for us? Every gift has a giver and a receiver. In Genesis, Adam accepted, welcomed and received Eve. This helped Eve discover herself.

What are some things that you have discovered about yourself because you have given the "gift of yourself?"

What happens when the gift of self is not accepted, not wel-

the Creator to the man, is 'welcomed' or accepted by him as a gift. The biblical text is completely clear and transparent at this point. At the same time, the acceptance of the woman by the man and the very way of accepting her become, as it were, a first gift in such a way that the woman, in giving herself (from the very first moment, in which, in the mystery of creation, she had been 'given' by the Creator to the man), at the same time 'discovers herself,' thanks to the fact that she has been accepted and welcomed and thanks to the way in which she had been received by the man. She therefore finds herself in her own gift of self ('through a sincere gift of self,' Gaudium et Spes, 24:3) when she has been accepted in the way in which the Creator willed her, namely, 'for her own sake,' through her humanity and femininity; she comes to the innermost depth of her own person and to the full possession of herself when, in this acceptance, the whole dignity of the gift is ensured through the offer of what she is in the whole truth of her humanity and in the whole reality of her body and her sex, of her femininity. We add that this finding of oneself in one's own gift becomes the source of a new gift of self that grows by the power of the inner disposition to the exchange of the gift and in the measure in which it encounters the same and even deeper acceptance and welcome as the fruit of an ever more intense consciousness of the gift itself."^[27]

What is the Pope saying? God gave Eve to Adam. The fact that she was given to Adam by God helps her to know that she is of value, of worth. When we give something, we give something that is of worth. For example when a sports player is traded to another team for a large amount of money, he is given up. In the act of the trade, the worth and value of the player is made known or demonstrated. Eve was not only given, but she was accepted and welcomed by Adam. The fact that she was accepted and welcomed helps her to know that she is of value, of worth. This affirmation caused her to realize the gift she was and to give it more and freely.

In our life, how are we given? How are we accepted and welcomed? We are willing to give the gift of our self when we feel appreciated (accepted and welcomed). We become shy, reserved and hesitant to give the gift of our self when we are not accepted or welcomed, when we are not appreciated.

What is the role of the family in accepting and welcoming the gift of self? The family is the sanctuary of life and the first place in which a vocation is nurtured. "It is necessary to go

"You will carry the proclamation of Christ into the new millennium. When you return home, do not grow lax. Reinforce and deepen your bond with the Christian communities to which you belong. From Rome, from the City of Peter and Paul, the Pope follows you with affection and, paraphrasing Saint Catherine of Siena's words, reminds you: 'If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze!'"^[10]

Many times our standard for perfection is comparing our self to others or to goals that the world or people have for us. We must remember that we can only be perfect, and will only be perfect, when we know and act out God's will. It is then that we will be what we should be and set the whole world on fire.

When a surgeon wants to find imperfections they shine light on the body. It is in the light that the body can be made perfect. An artist shines light on a canvas in order to perfect each stroke. It is then only in the light of Christ that humanity can know its imperfections and be made perfect through the grace of God.

"Shine on me, O fire ever burning and never failing (cf. Ex 3:2), and then I shall begin, through and in your light, to see light, and to recognize you truly as the source of light. Stay, sweet Jesus, stay for ever. In this decay of nature, give more grace. Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as you shine: so to shine as to be a light to others. The light, O Jesus, will be all from you. None of it will be mine. No merit to me. It will be you who shine through me upon others. O let me thus praise you, in the way which you love best, by shining on all those around me. Give light to them as well as to me; light them with me, through me. Teach me to show forth your praise, your truth, your will. Make me preach you without preaching – no by words, but by my example and by the catching force, the sympathetic influence, of what I do – by my visible resemblance to your saints, and the evident fullness of the love which my hearts bears to you."^[11]

The Priesthood: A Gift of Self - Lesson and Discussion

"the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light"

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."^[12] Through Baptism, we are called to be priests, in that we are called to offer our self as Christ offered himself. We are

the offering, and we are the one offering our self (Priest and Victim).

In offering our self with Christ, we bring light into the darkness. This is captured in the Christmas Carol, O Holy Night. “Long lay the world in sin and error pining. Till He appeared and the Spirit felt its worth.” Darkness is the absence of light. Before Jesus offered himself on the Cross for man, the world lay in sin and error. Through Baptism we die to sin, we die with Christ in order to rise with Christ. It is this unity with Christ that continues the saving mission of Christ, which is to disperse light into the darkness of the world.

How do we give the gift of self to God and to others? We must give the best we can; we offer our body and soul as a living sacrifice. “I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”[13]

How is offering our self as a living sacrifice like the sacrifice of an athlete? Faith is keeping fit (muscle and agility). Truth is practicing the correct skills, having knowledge of the games, plays, etc. Holiness is staying injury free, preventative (watching out for sin) and re-habilitation (reconciliation). Chastity means not cheating, being pure, and being clean. The words living and sacrifice are opposites. A sacrifice, especially in the Old Testament, is to kill something. To be a living sacrifice, we must die to our self. We die to our wants and desires and live in the wants and desires of Jesus.

TV AD – “Fall Down Seven Times, Get Up Eight” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION 0:30

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzvFAcbSOR>

The commercial shows basketball star Dwayne Wade takes a hard foul going to the rim. It then shows a flashback of him sacrificing his body to make the play from High School to College up to the pros. His willingness to sacrifice is a great example to his teammates his desire to do what it takes to win.

In what ways do we die to self as an athlete dies to self?

Faith (keeping fit) takes discipline; we must think clearly and let these thoughts inform our actions. Our interior life must be in shape. Just as our body can quickly get “out of shape,” so to our interior life, our souls can also “get out of shape.” Pope Francis

God wants and loves us and expects us to give ourselves to Him. Second we want to give God the best self that we can. We make ourselves the best offering through Faith, Truth, Holiness, and Chastity.

How marvelous is the priesthood of the Christian, for he is both the victim that is offered on his own behalf, and the priest who makes the offering. He does not need to go beyond himself to seek what he is to sacrifice to God. With himself and in himself, he brings the sacrifice he is to offer God for himself. The victim remains, and the priest remains, always one and the same. Sacrificed, the victim still lives: the priest who sacrifices cannot kill. Truly it is an amazing sacrifice in which a body is offered without being slain and blood is offered without being shed.

What is your passion? What or who do you give yourself to? Doubt or Faith? Falsehoods or Truth? Sinfulness or Holiness? Impurity or Chastity? **Do you pray daily? If not, why? If so, what?**

We are a Gift! - Lesson and Discussion

“Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men”

We are the Church. The Church is born from the side of Christ, just as Eve was born from the side of Adam. Eve was the “gift” received by Adam. We are the “gift” received by Christ. In the Gospel, Jesus not only calls Peter, Andrew, James and John, but also receives them. He not only receives them but also wants to perfect them, make them into something greater than they are currently. Jesus calls, He receives and He perfects the gift of self. He did this with the apostles and He desires to call, receive, and make us into what we are meant to be. We are called, received, and made into the people we are meant to be so that we can be given to the world. This way, we can go out and be fishers of men. By being the person we are meant to be, we will draw others to our self. Since we are united with Christ, we will be drawing others truly not to our self but to Christ who lives within us.

We see the love of Christ toward His Church prefigured in the Story of Adam and Eve. Adam prefigures Christ while Eve prefigures the Church.

“Genesis 2:23-25 allows us to deduce that, due to original innocence, the woman, who is the mystery of creation ‘is given’ by

those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”[25] God is Spirit, and so He looks for worshipers who are like Himself. We are true worshipers and true priests. We pray in spirit, and so offer in spirit the sacrifice of prayer. Prayer is an offering that belongs to God and is acceptable to Him: it is the offering He has asked for, the offering He planned as His own.

Ordained (Ministerial Priesthood) priests speak and act not on their own authority, but rather in the Person of Christ the Head and in the name of the Church. Think of the Ministerial Priesthood as manifesting the head of Christ and the common priesthood as manifesting the body of Christ. The Body follows the Head. Also think of the ministerial priesthood as the physical manifestation (in the person of Christ) and the common priesthood as the spiritual manifestation (in the spirit of Christ).

How does the common priesthood, the lay person share in the priesthood of Christ? We Pray, we Offer!

We Pray! – Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God (an offering). We take our prayer and dedicate it with our whole heart. Fatten it on faith. Tend it by truth. Keep it unblemished through innocence. Keep it clean through chastity. Crown it with love. We must escort it [prayer] to the altar of God in a procession of good works to the sound of psalms and hymns.

We offer! – We are the offering. Abraham was asked by God to offer his son Isaac as an offering. Isaac went with his dad and helped carry the wood for the offering. He finally told his dad that they had everything except the offering itself. Isaac did not know that he would be the offering![26] We also are the offering! We are also the one doing the offering! We must therefore offer the best.

How do we offer our self? As it says above, we must view ourselves the way a rancher would view his cattle, the way a rancher would present (offer) his cattle. He would fatten them (Faith), He would tend them and keep them safe (Truth), He would want cattle that are unblemished (Holiness), He would want them clean (Chastity), and He would crown and adorn them (Love).

What would make someone not want to give himself or herself to God?

How do we offer our self to God? First we must know that

reminds us, “The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God’s voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades.”[14]

Truth (practicing correct skills) means that in every area of life we seek out truth. It can be difficult to know the truth, so we must be “sober and alert”[15] for Satan who is the “father of lies”[16] is seeking to trap us in falsehood. We have to die to the falsehoods that we have been told. For example, if we have been told that we are fat and ugly and begin to believe that, we must die to that falsehood and embrace the truth. We must tell Satan to go away!

MOVIE – “Lord of the Rings: Gollum” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION 2:24

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLvIFRNbqO>

Satan lies to us and tells us that we are something that we are not. It is only when we demand that he leave and then choose not to believe his lies, that we are free to understand and truly live out the gift of our self.

When an athlete or musician practices something incorrectly, they not only perform incorrectly but also have to put in a lot of work to re-teach themselves. To be holy is to die to self, because it means getting rid of any imperfections so that we can follow the words of Christ and “be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.”[17] We die to self when we say no to the sin that everyone else is embracing and temporarily enjoying. We die to self when we confess our past sins and make a firm resolve “with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin.”[18] We die to our self when, as we leave the confessional we avoid occasions of sin, which our world and possibly our friends, call us back to. Chastity is to die to self. We are called to be pure and clean, in our thoughts, words and deeds. It is difficult to live out the beatitude, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”[19] Many do not see God, because many do not live out the virtue of chastity. Those who are chaste and do see God, may even be mocked for seeing God and striving to remain pure.

Can we just give part of our self? No! An athlete cannot give just his arm or his leg to his team. He must give his full body. A spouse does not just give part of their body to their spouse but their whole self. To sacrifice means to give all and hold nothing back. It means that we could lose all. We have to be willing to lose something, for that is what sacrifice means.

Sacrifice, even in children's movies, is attractive and gives us hope and zeal in doing good. In the Disney Movie *Cars*, Lightning McQueen has to make a choice on whether or not he is going to sacrifice his victory and possibly his career for the sake of a friend. There are many things to consider: He has worked hard to get to where he is at, the final race. He could lose the Piston Cup and the fame and money that would come with it. He could lose his career; maybe others won't respect a car that purposely loses. He considers how a crash affected his friend Doc Hudson and wonders if it will affect The King in the same way. He considers the friendship and wisdom that Doc Hudson said, "It is just an empty cup". An empty cup is not worth sacrificing for. The chalice at Mass is not empty. It is full, full of the Blood of Christ. We too must give our self to the fullest.

Saint Paul says, "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." [20] God would never ask us to do something that He does not give us the ability to do. It is the priest that presents to God the sacrifices and gifts of the people to God. Christ is the High Priest. Through Baptism, we die with Christ and rise with Christ and we begin to share in life of Christ. Part of Christ's life was the priesthood. Through Baptism, all Christians are raised to priestly status. All Christians share in the common priesthood of Christ, and some men will be called to the ordained priesthood of Christ.

Christ teaches us not only what to give, but how to give. What we give is what He gave, the gift of self. How to give is in Him, with Him, through Him - uniting every offering of our self to His perpetual offering of His Passion, Death and Resurrection. How we offer our self is in perfect imitation of how Christ offered Himself.

Through Baptism we have the right to offer our self to God, the Father, through the Son. We are connected to the priesthood of Christ, so we now, with the help of the ministerial or ordained priesthood, offer our self to God. The baptized have become "living stones" to be "built into a spiritual house, to be a holy

priesthood." [21] By Baptism, we share in the priesthood of Christ, in His prophetic and royal mission. We are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that they may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light." [22] Baptism gives us a share in the common priesthood of all Believers.

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted." [23] God became man and like us in all things except sin so that, He could be our high priest. Jesus is the only one qualified to be the high priest because he is faithful and merciful. His mercy is so abundant that he allows His people to share in His one priesthood - a priesthood that expiates sin and is at the service of God. "Christ is the source of all priesthood: the priest of the old law was a figure of Christ, and the priest of the new law acts in the person of Christ." [24] There are two ways to participate in the one priesthood of Christ. The first is in the ordained or ministerial priesthood, which participates in the priesthood of Christ differently than the common priesthood.

The Ministerial Priesthood (Bishops and Priests) is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a means by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads His Church. For this reason it is transmitted by its own sacrament - the sacrament of Holy Orders. In our Bishops and Priests, Christ's priesthood is made visible (in persona Christi).

The common priesthood (all the Faithful) is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace - a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit.

How God desires us to worship, we learn from the Gospel. "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so