



March 29, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

In today's Gospel, Jesus is drawing to the end of his earthly mission. His disciples have been with him now for almost 3 years. And here once again they see Jesus showing divine knowledge: he knew how Lazarus's sickness would end, and he knew already with no messenger, when Lazarus had died. And yet, even at this late point in his ministry, after 3 years of witnessing Christ's miracles, and seeing his divine wisdom, his disciples still don't understand him; they still don't know their Lord. They still misconstrue his words - they think he's talking about normal sleep when he is really talking about death. They still doubt his good sense and power - they try to dissuade him from returning to Jerusalem, where his enemies lurk. After all this time and experience, they just don't get it. Any lesser Lord would have long ago given up on these slow followers, but not Jesus. He is a Lord who serves his subjects, teaching them and guiding them to the fullness of life with tireless patience. The needier they are, the more attentive he is, the more eager to give them whatever it takes to help them believe in, trust, and follow him. And aren't we just like the Apostles? We have been Christians for so long, heard so many sermons, received Communion so often. And yet, in the middle of life's ups and downs we still find it hard to figure out what God is asking of us. In the middle of life's temptations, we still find it hard to trust him enough to follow his will instead of our whims. But he hasn't given up on us, and he never will. Our Lord is truly Lord, but he is a Lord who rules by love.

The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is a powerful reminder of the fact that God never gives up on us. When the priest consecrates the hosts during the Mass, Jesus becomes truly present in them, body, blood, soul, and divinity. Then two things happen. First, he gives himself to each one of us in Holy Communion. He is fully present in each host, and so he gives himself completely to each one of us, without holding anything back. And he will never refuse to come to us, as long as we have expressed our sincere desire to receive him by confessing beforehand, in the sacrament of reconciliation, any mortal sins on our conscience. But that is not enough for his love, just as it was not enough for him to come down to earth at the cave in Bethlehem. He had to show the very depths of his love, and to do that he climbed onto the cross at Calvary. Just so, after Jesus becomes present in the Eucharist and gives himself to us in Holy Communion, then is present in the tabernacle to stay with us. He is here, truly present, every day and night, all day and all night. Many times we have received Holy Communion simply out of routine, without really appreciating the greatness of the gift. But Jesus keeps on coming. He hasn't given up on us. Many times we forget about his presence in the tabernacle, and instead of dropping by to visit him, to share our sorrows and our joys with him, we leave him alone and do our own thing. But Jesus stays anyway. He never gives up on us. Today, when we can't come to communion, let's appreciate this gift all the more and long for when our community can gather at the altar once more.

May God Bless You,

Fr. Dan