



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

15 April 2019, 9:31 AM

Summary reflection 11: choosing to live to give

The following is a summary reflection of the eleventh *and final* talk given by Father Raniero Cantalamessa to the US bishops during their 2019 retreat:

We begin by being with Jesus, being taught by him, and following his lead, especially living the risen life of Jesus, already, though not completely, as it will be with heaven.

The life of a Catholic is necessarily different, distinctive, on account of being animated by the Spirit of Jesus, which is best expressed in the Eucharist.

At the Last Supper, Jesus used bread made from wheat and wine made from grapes, maybe because the law of Moses requires it, but also for their symbolic value.

A grain of wheat is ground into flour and baked into bread. A grape is crushed into juice and fermented into wine.

These give their very self to bring life and gladness to others; you might say this is their joy and fulfillment.

This captures the very Spirit of Jesus, who came to serve, not be served; to lay down his life. For this I have come, says Jesus, I live to give life and gladness to others.

Using wheat bread and grape wine at the Last Supper was what scholars call an enacted prophecy: it played out what was to happen in Jesus' Passion.

The Eucharistic food also serves as a lasting memorial. Jesus says: Do this in memory of me." The "this" refers to the sacrament, but also to imitating risen life, living to give.

Other living things don't have a choice on whether to live to give; humans do. Sadly, not all do, not even all Christians.

In Baptism we are given a share in the risen life of Jesus. But we have to choose to live to give life and gladness to others.

To live the risen life of Jesus is like the Copernican revolution: I, me, and mine, and more stuff for me is not the center around which the world revolves; rather, the Spirit shifts our focus to we, you and ours, and to living to give life and gladness to others.

To live to give is the cause of our happiness and fulfillment, here, and in the hereafter.

Father Cantalamessa ended by exhorting a tempest-tossed Church to take courage and work at winning the battle against the evils of clergy sexual abuse.

How? One way to deliver on the promise of protecting children and youth, healing wounds, and restoring trust in clergy is by choosing to live to give:

To give life and gladness to others, by forgiving and serving, in humility and charity, no matter who it is, even an enemy, and whether or not the person is deserving, asks nicely, is aware of the cost, or is grateful.

Follow Jesus in his risen life. Profess faith in his Resurrection. Say it: I live to give!

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque