



Homily for 5/26/2019

6th Sunday of Easter, Year C

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What do you give to the one who has everything?

Imagine going to the birthday party of a billionaire. Everyone is expected to bring a gift. But what do you give to the man who already has everything?

Now imagine standing before the throne of God, the creator of the heavens and the earth. What do you have that He needs? What do you have to commend yourself to Him? Alone, the answer is nothing. But when you belong to Jesus Christ, when you belong to His body, when you take His name as yours, then you have the only thing worthy of God: God from God, light from light, true God from true God. But it goes deeper than that. When by Grace, we present God the Son as our offering, The gift giving in heaven is turned on its head. When we come offering to give Jesus to the Father, an amazing thing happens: the Almighty Father is given to us!

The most profound statement I think in today's Scripture is from the Gospel when Jesus says, "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him."

Why is this profound? Because it answers the greatest longing of every human being's heart, "Am I loved?" And further, "Do I belong somewhere?"

The answer given definitively in the Christian faith is, "Yes," you are loved by the very creator of the universe and you belong in his house.

But we have to learn to live in this house.

We call ourselves human 'beings' but what does 'being' mean? It means that we exist. But even more so that we have a purpose, an end, a goal. We are made in the image and likeness of God!

St. Irenaeus famously said, "The Glory of God is man fully alive." But here is the dilemma: Death takes away from God's glory. Death comes from sin. Sin is death and death is sin. The opposite is also true. Holiness leads to life! So being human isn't just about existing in an arbitrary way, but rather it means 'well-being' - and ultimately, a state of well-being that cannot be corrupted, which we would say would be 'eternal being' - or in more familiar terms, salvation.

God became man that man might become like unto God, that is, fully alive and without the corruption of sin which leads to death.

This is where the moral life enters in. Jesus repeats often, "Keep my word, keep my commandments, love one another, take up your cross, follow me." When God and the Church teach us about what is moral, it is not meant to be punitive or coercive to one's freedom. Rather it is always geared to man fully alive - at his best, if you will. The Ten Commandments aren't about telling man "no," but rather indicating who man is at his best. The argument has its inverse also, in that sin is man at his worst and results in the disintegration of his being. In fact, that is the classical metaphysical definition of death: the disintegration of body and soul. Sin disintegrates us and moves us away from our well-being. Holiness, on the other hand, makes us more whole (pun intended) and leads us to salvation.

So what present will please God when we stand before his throne? A human being fully alive living morally, fully integrated and eternally happy.