



# MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED!

FEB. 02, 2020 / PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD

## Spiritual Ponderings:

### Mass and Evangelization

A few years ago, a group of ex-Protestant ministers now Catholics gathered together and wrote a series of articles about what attracted them to the Catholic Church. They called the series *Catholic For a Reason*. The third volume of this series was titled: *Catholic For A Reason III: Scripture and the Mystery of the Mass* and focused on what it was about the Mass that they found so inspiring. For the month of February, I have decided to reflect with you on an article titled “The Mass And Evangelization” and it was written by Curtis Martin. Quotes from his article will be in bold and my commentary will be in normal font.

**In evangelization, our goal is not simply to get people to go to Church, or even to get them to go to Heaven. The goal is to allow Jesus to reach their hearts—to woo them into full earthly Communion.**

I do not every think that I have ever heard of an evangelist being called a match maker before but that would not be a bad description of what an evangelist does. He or she tries to help another person develop a relationship with Christ. It is not about the numbers or how far one progresses. It is about the relationship.

**Evangelicals invite people to their Church services to evangelize them. Using the Mass the way Evangelicals use their church services can be awkward. Just as the Holy Eucharist is more than a mere piece of bread that only symbolizes Jesus, the Mass is more than a mere church service. Because of the radical difference between the Mass and other church services, we can't do what Evangelicals can—we can do more.**

I believe that this is one of the beautiful insights behind Catholics using ALPHA to evangelize. ALPHA allows the person to evangelize and build community before make the next step. A person must go through the Police Academy before he or she is ready to become a police officer.

I think that there is also degrees of intimacies in all relationships. A person should be fully informed about what they are getting into before they get to deep.

On a side note – pretending a problem does not exist does not help solve the problem. The first step in to admit we have a problem. I think the Catholic Church does more for unity by asking non-Catholics to reframe from taking our Eucharist then Protestant Church that have “open” communion.

**When we come to Mass, we enter into worship of God. I say, “enter into” because the worship exists whether we are there or not. In the heavenly Jerusalem, the Blessed Trinity is worshipped day and night. The Mass is a real, but veiled participation in the heavenly worship**

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to see the Blue Man Group in Las Vegas. Thirty minutes into the show a small alarm went off and the announcer began proclaiming “The Late Comers Have Arrived - The Late Comers Have Arrived” over and over again and on the big screen they showed all the people who had arrived late for the show coming in to



the theatre. I found it amusing and wish that I could do that just once at Mass. I think the idea of “entering into” the Divine Liturgy is something I am going to have to pray about. I also know the more serious I take my obligation, the more serious others will.

**In the Mass, we are united with all the saints and holy angels, including your particular guardian angel and the guardian angles of every person we will ever meet.**

Knowledge of this should inspire us to be grateful for the invitation. We are “somebodies” among heavenly “somebodies”. Do we take time to ponder what heaven is going to be like? Hopefully it is a lot like Mass where people worship together and not some idea of a place where all our hedonistic fantasies take place.

**See in this light, evangelization is to the Mass, what courtship is to marriage. As a young couple gets to know one another more and more, their hearts long to be together. As they prepare for marriage, they learn what marriage entails. Only then is it time for marriage—a lifelong covenantal commitment, and conjugal union. So too, evangelization is designed to awaken a love for God, and gratitude for His forgiveness and for all of His gifts. As an individual prepares for Holy Communion, this new convert should learn what the Christian life entails. Only then can the convert receive Baptism—a lifelong commitment, and the intimacy of Eucharistic Communion.**

Let us never take our Catholic faith for granted and let us grow in our appreciation of the heavenly liturgy.

### **BREAKING OPEN THE WORD**

**February 2 2020 ◊ Feast of the Presentation of the Lord ◊ Lectionary: 524 ◊ Gospel LK 2:22-40**

When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.” The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted Band you yourself a sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

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**Spiritual Reflection:** Anna and Simeon are children of a holy space because God was made manifest to them in the acts of ritual within the temple. God is made manifest to us in the Eucharist through the rituals of the Mass.

**Spiritual Questions:**

1. How am I feeling at the present moment when it comes to witnessing the fulfilment of God’s promise?
2. When I am celebrating the Church’s liturgy do, I often sense the illumination of mystery?
3. How patient am I when it comes to waiting for the Lord?
4. When does the Christmas season end for you?
5. Do you believe that the house of God (the Church) is the fireplace of God’s revelation?





## Thought of the Day

- Sunday** God considers you a holy person because you are special to Him.
- Monday** Patience is power. Patience is not an absence of action; rather it is "timing" it waits on the right time to act, for the right principles and in the right way. - Fulton J. Sheen
- Tuesday** When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall... think of it, always. - Mahatma Gandhi
- Wednesday** The Lord is knocking at the door of our hearts. Have we put a sign on the door saying: 'Do not disturb'? - Pope Francis.
- Thursday** Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession.... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate. - Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- Friday** The process of building trust is an interesting one, but it begins with yourself, with what I call self-trust, and with your own credibility, your own trustworthiness. If you think about it, it's hard to establish trust with others if you can't trust yourself. - Stephen Covey
- Saturday** A clever person solves a problem. A wise person avoids it. - Albert Einstein

### PRO-LIFE



January 2020

### Prayer for People to Answer the Call to be People of Justice

We pray that Christians may do all they can to exert their influence for the cause of the Gospel morality and justice. May they show concern for the poor, the planet, and for peace.

In a special way may they never remain silent when there is a question of preserving life or destroying it, but always let our voice be heard bravely on the side of the God of the living.

God we ask you to be a refuge and fortress for those who have fallen away from the Church. Please rescue them from what ever evils led them away from your Son's Mystical Body and bring them back to Your Holy Church.



### St. Monica Society

*Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.*

## Catholic Prayers

### BLESSING OF A CHILD

Heavenly Father, lover of all, we praise you for giving us Jesus as our Savior: He blessed the children who came to Him, and welcomes those who come to Him now. Look with love upon N. and protect him/her with Your love. May he/she grow in wisdom and age and strength in Your presence and in the sight of all. We ask this blessing, Father, through Your beloved Son, Christ our Lord. Amen.

### BLESSING OF SEVERAL CHILDREN

Heavenly Father, lover of all, we praise you for giving us Jesus as our Savior: He blessed the children who came to Him, and welcomes those who come to Him now. Look with love upon these children. and protect them with Your love. May they grow in wisdom and age and strength in Your presence and in the sight of all. We ask this blessing, Father, through Your beloved Son, Christ our Lord. Amen.



## Humor

