

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, May 30th 2017

In today's gospel we hear Jesus say to his Father, "I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do...I revealed your name..."

Join me in attending the First Communion Eucharistic celebration of seventy-five 8-year-olds. All dressed up - boys in spiffy new suits and girls in white dresses, flowers in their hair and some with short flowing veils. So proud! Pure delight! By twos, with their hands together as straight as a church steeples, they ceremoniously processed down the center aisle of the overflowing church. What began as a solemn procession ended in a colts' trot and a gentle pile-up. At the end of each pew hung a self-made banner colorfully decorated with Eucharistic symbols and a child's name. As the children filed in they faded into their family's designated pew wiggling for space among their parents, siblings and family members. Each child greeted with loving smiles of pride and encouragement. The joy and expectation was contagious and exhilarating. Children stifling giggles, while parents struggled to restrain theirs. The Body of Christ was aflutter with pride, joy, love and anticipation.

The four priests on the altar initially seemed an afterthought. The altar was decorated with white flowers. The music was lovely, but still all eyes were on the children who were coming to meet Jesus in a new way. They were not receiving Jesus for the 'first' time, but in a 'new' way. They had been appropriately prepared for the significance of Eucharist. For a full year in class they had studied and talked about the theology of Eucharist – the body and blood of Jesus; the sacred and the holy and how they were part of it. They memorized prayers, sang songs and practiced for the big day. But, more importantly, their families, friends, neighbors and church community had been preparing them for this day for years. These children had already been enveloped into the loving heart of Jesus, into the Body of Christ. They had been receiving Jesus in countless ways for years.

The living Body of Christ. Parents lovingly, conscientiously walking with their children as they continue on their faith journeys. The community, the Body of Christ, actively supporting both parents and children in their respective faith journeys.

The Good news:

God is love and we are the Body of Christ. Both are states of being. God does not love, God is Love. Jesus does not love, Jesus is Love. We are the true Body of Christ only when we are the living Body of Christ. Body of Christ is meant to be a verb, not a noun. Love, compassion, friendship, laughter, solidarity reveal us as the living Body of Christ.

I 'glorify' the Lord when I live God's 'work' in action. When I live my personal vocation I do the Lord's 'work'. When I am parent, or child, or priest, or friend being Body of Christ, I 'glorify' God. My being reveals God's name.

For one little girl that day ended as she flew down the street on her bike with her white shoes peddling as fast as they could and her white dress billowing out behind her. Exhilarated and radiant in the full glory of God, glorifying God and revealing God's name: Joy!

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam - For the Greater Glory of God.

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