

Sunday June 23, 2019. Morning. Corpus Christi, Body and Blood of Christ. Three times a day, a thousand times a year, for xxx years, we have shared meals with others. During that final evening meal before his death, on a day that we remember and celebrate as Holy Thursday, Jesus raised the sharing of a simple meal of bread and wine to that of the greatest of celebrations.

Afternoon. In offering this meal, Jesus instituted the celebration of the Eucharist. He appointed his immediate followers to continue the consecration of bread and wine into that of the Body and Blood of Christ. Before that first generation of Christians died, they ordained select members of the next generation to continue to do so, and so on and so on. Fr Jim and I were ordained by Bishops Caggiano and Lori to lead the people of St Jude in the Eucharistic Celebration.

Evening. Every mass is all about Jesus. In persona Christi. In the person of Christ. No priest, of himself, has the power to turn bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus. It is because during the mass, the priest acts in Persona Christi, in the person of Christ — the power of Jesus acting through the priest — that the bread and wine becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus.

Monday, June 24, 2019. Morning. Today is the Birth of St John the Baptist. The Blessed Virgin Mary became pregnant with Jesus when Elizabeth was already six months pregnant with John the Baptist (Luke Chapter 1). In the beauty of the Church's calendar, we celebrate the birth of St John the Baptist (today), six months before we celebrate the birth of Jesus, thereby being true to the reality found in the Bible.

Afternoon. Elizabeth was barren and she and her husband were advanced in age. Her conception of John the Baptist was special, if not miraculous. Some thirty years into the future, shortly before his execution, John the Baptist would precede Jesus and literally point him out to be the Lamb of God. It is fitting that in his conception, he would precede Jesus and prefigure Jesus, in the sense that the special circumstances of the conception of John would point to the truly miraculous virginal conception of Jesus in the womb of Our Lady.

Evening. "He (John the Baptist) was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel (Luke 1)." Just as Jesus would come out of the desert to begin his public ministry, so John the Baptist would also come out of the desert to begin his public ministry of pointing out Jesus. These are just a couple of the many similarities in the lives of John the Baptist and Jesus.

Tuesday, June 25, 2019. Morning. Let us return to the Sunday's celebration of the Body and Blood of Christ. Every mass is all about Jesus because he instituted the mass in which his own Body and Blood become present on the altar.

Afternoon. As if it were not enough that he took the ordinary, everyday experience of sharing a meal and raised it to its supernatural end, Jesus gives us the added gift of allowing us to partake of him, quite literally, by eating his Body and drinking his Blood.

Evening. The first reception of Holy Communion was our entering more fully and more completely into our Church, an act and experience which we repeat countless times throughout our lives. Yes, in Baptism, we were received into the Church. In confirmation, we complete that which we began in Baptism. But in the sacrament of the Eucharist, we receive the Body and Blood of Jesus.

Wednesday, June 26, 2019. Morning. That the Body and Blood of Jesus would be part of our lives — part of the lives of every generation from the year 33 AD and into the future — is what our faith is all about.

Afternoon. Receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus is something Christians have been willing to risk their lives for — and many of them were martyred for — beginning with the first

generation of Christians including Saints Peter and Paul. It did not stop there. More Christians were martyred for their faith in the 20th century than in all other centuries of the Church combined.

Evening. Every time the priest speaks the words of Consecration, he speaks the very words that Jesus spoke some two thousand years ago, as recorded in four places in the Bible: The First Letter to the Corinthians and the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Same words, every time, everywhere over the past 2,000 years.

Thursday, June 27, 2019. Morning. We must begin with wheat bread and grape wine. If a priest finds himself in Japan with only rice cakes and sake, he must go out and find wheat bread and grape wine, for the consecration must begin with the same type of bread and wine that Jesus began with.

Afternoon. Transubstantiation. Trans: to change. Substant...: substance. The substance changes. The bread changes into the Body of Jesus. The wine changes into his blood. However, the properties or characteristics of bread and wine remain. Those who are allergic to gluten, would receive a special low-gluten host.

Evening. For a seeing is believing culture, it requires an act of faith for us to believe that the bread and wine truly become the Body and Blood, because they still look like and taste like bread and wine. After the Body of Jesus is reserved in the Tabernacle, the candle remains lit nearby to remind us that Jesus is truly present.

Friday, June 28, 2019. Morning. We are to be in a state of grace, free from sin, to receive the Eucharist. At some point in the recent past, we went to confession to be forgiven of our sins. Early on in the mass we confess our sins, "I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned..." "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy."

Afternoon. Shortly before we receive communion, we once again are mindful of the importance of being free from sin. "Forgive us our trespasses..." "by the help of your mercy, we may always be free from sin..." "Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world (3 times)..." "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World."

Evening. Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my Body, which will be given up for you; do this in memory of me. (Luke 22)." And so we have carried the command of Jesus to do this in memory of him for the past 2,000 years and counting.

Saturday, June 29, 2019. Morning. On the Church's calendar we have Saints Peter and Paul. Great Saints of the early church. Saint Peter is the main focus of much of the first part of the Acts of the Apostles, and Saint Paul is the main focus of much of the second part of the Acts of the Apostles. It would be hard to imagine the early church getting its start without these two great saints.

Afternoon. Each of these saints first had to receive forgiveness before he would go on to greatness. Peter would assert his love for Jesus three times (John 21) several days after he denied three times that he knew Jesus. Before Paul converted to the faith, he was guilty of imprisoning and possibly executing Christians.

Evening. If these two great saints had their differences, so we have to be OK with the reality that we may not always get along. "When Peter came to Antioch, I (Paul) opposed him to his face because he clearly was wrong. (Galatians)."

Sunday, June 30, 2019. Morning. Today's mass readings have to do with letting go of the past. Elisha asks permission to say goodbye to his past before he agrees to follow Elijah. The

second reading wants us not to return to the yoke of slavery once we have experienced freedom in our Christ-life. In response to Jesus' offer to come follow him, a man asks to first say farewell to his past.

Afternoon. The people in today's readings are asked to make a radical shift in their lifestyle, which will involve letting go of their past way of life. Giving up little things is easy. They do not have a great hold on us. But giving up big things is painfully hard and very difficult and impossible if we continue to look back at them. Say goodbye to that past way of life. Clean break. No looking back.

Evening. That which we must give up – for our own good, for the good of someone we love, for the good of our human family as a whole – regardless of the specific reason – let us remember that there is or was a reason why it is or was so hard for us to give it up – namely because it had such a firm hold on us. No looking back. It is still too powerful. If we look back, that hold it has on us will be reinforced rather than broken.