

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR  
PONTIFICAL HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS  
WITH CONSECRATION OF MARIAN CATECHISTS  
SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE  
LA CROSSE  
AUGUST 3, 2014

Is 55, 1-3  
Ps 145, 8-9. 15-16. 17-18  
Rom 8, 35. 37-39  
Mt 14, 13-21

### HOMILY

*Praised be Jesus Christ, now and for ever. Amen.*

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand men, recounted in today's Gospel, foreshadowed the even greater miracle of the Holy Eucharist, by which Our Lord feeds us and "the many" with the Heavenly Bread of His true Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Reflecting upon the miracle, in fact, helps us to contemplate the Most Blessed Sacrament which is, in the solemn teaching of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, "the source and summit of the Christian life."<sup>1</sup> In the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, the Council Fathers, drawing upon the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas, gave fuller expression to the truth that the Holy Eucharist is the fullest and most perfect expression of our life in Christ. They declared:

The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch.<sup>2</sup>

For us who are catechists, the Holy Eucharist contains the heart of the truth which we desire to communicate to those whom we are catechizing. It is the Mystery of Faith. We ponder the Blessed Sacrament ever anew, in order to grow in our understanding of the immeasurable and unceasing love of God for us. At the same time, the Holy Eucharist is the ultimate goal of our catechesis which finds its fulfillment in the worthy reception of Holy Communion by the

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<sup>1</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, "On the Church," 21 November 1964, no. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 7 December 1965, no. 5.

catechized and in their daily Eucharistic devotion.

The miracle itself underlines the essential relationship between the teaching of the faith and the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. After Our Lord heard of the martyrdom of Saint John the Baptist, he went to a secluded place, in order to pray. But a large crowd followed Him, hungry for both His word and for His works of mercy. In fact, when Our Lord saw the vast crowd, the Gospel tells us, “his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured the sick.”<sup>3</sup> One imagines how, throughout the day until evening, He instructed the crowd regarding the source of healing, both physical and spiritual, in the all-merciful love of God the Father Who had sent Him, God the Son, into the world. At the conclusion of the day, Our Lord does not send the people away, but he performs a miracle, in order to sustain them on their journey.

In the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand men, Our Lord manifested Himself as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah by which God the Father promised to provide the food and drink which would satisfy man’s deepest longings. Through the Prophet Isaiah, Our Lord declared:

Why spend your money for what is not bread;  
your wages for what fails to satisfy?  
Heed me, and you shall eat well,  
you shall delight in rich fare.  
Come to me heedfully,  
listen that you may have life.  
I will renew with you the everlasting covenant,  
the benefits assured to David.<sup>4</sup>

Christ alone satisfies our deepest hunger and thirst, the hunger and thirst for truth and love. Christ alone feeds us with the Heavenly Bread of His very Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, which heals our hearts wounded by sin and inflames them with divine love. Of the household of David,<sup>5</sup> He is the long-awaited Messiah, the Savior of the world. We see this truth reflected in the crowds who flocked to Jesus to hear His teaching and to receive His ministrations of divine pastoral charity.

Saint Paul makes clear the fidelity and endurance of the love of God for us. Receiving the Heavenly Bread of the Holy Eucharist, we understand the meaning of Saint Paul’s

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<sup>3</sup> Mt 14, 14.

<sup>4</sup> Is 55, 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Mt 1, 1; Lk 1, 27; Jn 7, 42.

declaration:

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life,  
 nor angels, nor principalities,  
 nor present things, nor future things,  
 nor powers, nor height, nor depth,  
 nor any other creature will be able to separate us  
 from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.<sup>6</sup>

The Holy Eucharist is the true Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ, first poured out for us, in a bloody manner, on Calvary and made always present for us anew, in an unbloody manner, in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Christ, seated in glory at the right of the Father, never ceases to pour out from His open Heart the gift of His very life to be the Heavenly Food of our earthly pilgrimage. Through the Holy Eucharist, Christ nourishes the life of the Holy Spirit within us, so that we do not grow faint along the way to eternal life but rather remain strongly united to Him as He accompanies us on the pilgrimage which brings us finally to Heaven.

Let us pray today that we may more and more dispose our hearts to cooperate with the gift of Christ's life received in the Sacrament of Baptism, and strengthened and increased by the Sacrament of Confirmation. Through these Sacraments, as the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel signifies, we have put on Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us pray also that we may faithfully nourish the same grace through participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice and in Eucharistic devotions. Let us pray that we may dispose ourselves more and more to live fully the truth of our life in Christ which He faithfully sustains within us through the Heavenly Food of the Holy Eucharist. Thus we have prayed in the words of Psalm 145: "The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs."<sup>7</sup>

My brothers who are to be consecrated as Marian Catechists today, and my brothers and sisters, consecrated Marian Catechists, who, with them, will renew the consecration which you have already made, always center your exercise of the apostolate of catechesis in the heart of our Christian faith which is the mystery of God the Father's immeasurable and unceasing love for us in His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In all that you do for the Apostolate, whether by catechizing or by offering prayers and sacrifices for those who catechize, begin always in the company of Our Eucharistic Lord and remain always in His company. Teach unceasingly the Mystery of

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<sup>6</sup> Rom 8, 38-39.

<sup>7</sup> Ps 145, 16.

Faith, which is the Holy Eucharist, the Mystery of the Redemptive Incarnation by which Our Lord remains ever alive for us in His holy Church.

As your spiritual father, I urge you to meditate daily upon the Mystery of Faith, the heavenly reality of the Holy Eucharist in the life of the Church and in your personal life. Ponder the words of our Lord at the consecration of the Mass, the words by which He transforms our offerings of bread and wine into His true Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity:

Take this, all of you, and eat of it,  
for this is my Body,  
which will be given up for you.  
Take this, all of you, and drink from it,  
for this is the chalice of my Blood,  
the Blood of the new and eternal covenant,  
which will be poured out for you and for many  
for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>8</sup>

In the Holy Eucharist, Christ makes present for us His Sacrifice on Calvary. He offers up His Body for our eternal salvation, and, from His glorious pierced Heart, He pours out His Blood for the forgiveness of our sins. God our Father has given us no greater sign of His love!

Through the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to which you give solemn expression by your act of consecration, live always in the company of our Eucharistic Lord. Entrust into His glorious pierced Heart, ever open to receive your heart, all of your prayer, study, and teaching. Place your hearts daily anew into the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, living the consecration you are making or renewing this morning. Through your regular sacramental encounters with Christ in Confession and, above all, in Holy Communion, live ever more fully in Christ, so that you can bring Christ ever more effectively to those whom you catechize and to our world.

Let us all now lift up our hearts, together with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus. Let us seek the joy and peace of our hearts in the pure and selfless love of His Divine Heart. May our Eucharistic Lord receive us into His Heart, purifying us of all sin, and filling us with the divine love which disposes us to be true and faithful teachers of the faith. Let us go now to Christ, Our Eucharistic Lord. In Him, the promises of God the Father are fulfilled in our lives:

Come to me heedfully,

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<sup>8</sup> *The Roman Missal*, English translation according to the third typical edition, 2011.

listen that you may have life.

I will renew with you the everlasting covenant,  
the benefits assured to David.<sup>9</sup>

*Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection, have mercy on us!*

*Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America and Star of the New Evangelization, pray for us!*

*Saint Juan Diego, pray for us!*

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE

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<sup>9</sup> Is 55, 3.