

Wednesday of the Thirty-Second Week in Ordinary Time

Homily of Bishop John O. Barres

St. Agnes Cathedral

November 11, 2020

On this Veterans Day and on the Memorial of St. Martin of Tours, Bishop and patron of soldiers and patron of France, we give thanks for the many sacrifices of our veterans and pray for the souls of all veterans. We pray too for all those currently serving in the military and for their families and we ask for them the intercession of St. Martin of Tours.

Luke 17 presents us with the story of the ten lepers who are healed. Only one of the ten, the Samaritan, returns to Jesus, glorifying God and thanking Jesus.

St. Bernard writes: “Blessed is the soul who every time he receives a gift of grace from God, returns to Him, to Him who responds to our gratitude for the favors we have received by giving us new favors.” (*Divine Intimacy*, 839-840)

Think of the beautiful words of the Gloria: “We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you. We give you thanks for your great glory.”

Our thanks to God is so deeply connected to our giving God glory.

The spirit of Thanksgiving is Eucharistic and meant to be part of the rhythm of our lives.

In his 2003 encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, Pope St. John Paul II said that he wanted each of us “to rekindle our Eucharistic Amazement”¹ and to once again realize that every Mass has a “cosmic character”² and that every Mass “is celebrated on the Altar of the World.”³

When we rekindle our spirit of thanksgiving, sacrifice and remembrance around the Altar of Sacrifice, when we rekindle our Eucharistic faith, awe and amazement in the truth of the Real Presence, then our marriages and our families are rekindled in

¹ Pope John Paul II’s April 17, 2003 encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia (On the Eucharist)*, 6.

² *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 8.

³ *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 8.

Christ. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life are rekindled. A missionary spirit, evangelization and effective catechesis at every level are rekindled. A devotion to the inspired Word of God – through a contemplative *lectio divina* -- is rekindled resulting in what Pope Benedict XVI calls “a new spiritual springtime.”

Think of the moments in your life past and present when the Holy Spirit rekindled your own Eucharistic faith and amazement in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and your spirit of Thanksgiving through the Eucharist.

I remember in my first parish, Holy Family parish in Newark, Delaware very close to the University of Delaware. I would be celebrating Mass as a young priest and one face out in the assembly was different from the others.

A middle-aged couple would be sitting near the choir. As I looked out at the people during the Eucharist Prayer, woman’s face always had this ecstatic mystical glow of thanksgiving throughout the Mass.

I always had the sense that the Holy Spirit had given her a special awareness and understanding of the miraculous invisible realities that occur in, through and before us every time we celebrate the Catholic Mass together.

She dealt with a plethora of health challenges and carried her Cross nobly with her husband Chuck. Her suffering, her Crosses were deeply connected to her ecstatic experience of the Catholic Mass being the unbloody renewal of Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary. Every time I remember this wonderful couple and my experience as a young priest, the Holy Spirit “rekindles my spirit of Thanksgiving and my Eucharistic amazement.”

So today at this Mass, we ask the Holy Spirit to renew and rekindle our Eucharistic spirit of Thanksgiving.