

Wednesday of the Third Week of Easter

Homily of Bishop Barres

St. Agnes Cathedral

May 4, 2022

Our Gospel today is from John chapter 6. We call John 6 “the Bread of Life Discourse.”

Studying, praying and contemplating John 6 is an opportunity for us to “rekindle our Eucharistic amazement”, rekindle our contemplation of Eucharistic theology and spirituality, and rekindle our Eucharistic evangelization and commitment to a Eucharistic Revival.

In his 2007 Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity*, Pope Benedict XVI says: “Every great reform (in the history of the Church) is linked to the rediscovery of belief in the Lord’s Eucharistic presence among his people.”

Together we pray for a “Massive” return to the Catholic Mass on Long Island!

The Multiplication of Loaves earlier in John 6 reaches back to the miraculous manna that comes from heaven in the Old Testament (from the Book of Exodus Chapter 16) and reaches forward to and foreshadows the Institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper and Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary.

Our Lord says in John 6: “It was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world...I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.”

As Catholics on fire with the inspired Sacred Scriptures, our hearts burn with these biblical connections that are the foundation of our Eucharistic theology, spirituality and evangelization. Word and Sacrament always go together.

In *The Word of the Lord*, Pope Benedict XVI writes: “The Eucharist opens us to an understanding of Scripture, just as Scripture for its part illumines and explains the mystery of the Eucharist. Unless we acknowledge the Lord’s real presence in the Eucharist, our understanding of Scripture remains imperfect.”

Our love for the Word of God – the mystical biblical connections between the Old Testament’s Miraculous Manna, the Multiplication of Loaves, the Last Supper and Calvary -- illumines our love for the Eucharist. In turn, our love for the Eucharist illumines our love for the Word of God.

We see so clearly the power of the Eucharistic Sacred Heart of Jesus in the lives of great saints and martyrs who fed on the Word of God and the Body and Blood of Christ.

St. Oscar Romero’s life and martyrdom in El Salvador reflects this reality!

Celebrating Mass in a small hospital chapel in 1980, St. Oscar Romero made the holy sacrifice of his life as a Catholic martyr while celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. He lived the Paschal Mystery rhythm of the Catholic Mass and the Eucharistic Sacred Heart of Jesus.

He calls us very personally through his intercession and invites us to do the same.

May I thank you and your families for your love and fidelity to the Catholic Mass and the Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

Thank you too for the joyful and humble way you invite your family, friends and colleagues at work to be faithful to the Mass.

We are all called to be Eucharistic Evangelizers – each and every day!

Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, pray for us!

St. Joseph, pray for us!

St. Oscar Romero, Eucharistic Martyr and Evangelizer, pray for us!