

Fr. Jeff's Weekly Homily

Feast of the Most Holy Trinity / First Communion

May 18, 2008

READING 1: Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9

“The Lord, The Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity”...”I pray the Lord go with us although this is a stiff necked people, pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.”

READING 2: 2 Corinthians 13: 11-13

“Brothers, mend your ways. Encourage one another. Live in harmony and peace and the God of peace will be with you”...”The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all!”

GOSPEL: John 3: 16-18

God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes avoids condemnation. But whoever does not believe is already condemned for not believing in the Name of God's only Son.

This is a very big day in your lives children. It is a day of beauty and grace and love. Thank you moms and dads for taking your responsibility so seriously as we prepared your family for this great spiritual step. Children, grandparents, godparents and friends, let's give these parents some applause.

Children, can you see my heart...No, of course not, my heart beats in my chest. But, look, now do you see this heart on my chest? We use this kind of a heart when we want to say that we love someone, right? It may not be the heart that beats inside my chest, but it is real, it is an expression of my love. I place this heart here today to remind me that I love Jesus.

Because Jesus loves us first, we can love him.

- Jesus loved us with all his heart when he told his disciples that this bread is his body for the life of the world.
- Jesus loved us with his whole heart when he said this wine is his blood for the forgiveness of sins.
- Jesus loved us so much that everywhere he went he healed what people most needed to have healed.

- Jesus loved us so much that he heroically gave up his life on the cross for us.
- Jesus loves us so much that he still gives us his body and he still gives us his blood. He does this because he wants us to know that he will always be with us.
- Jesus loves us today just as much as he loved his friends at the Last Supper dinner table.

People have been receiving their First Holy Communion for two-thousand years. When we receive him today, he touches us all over with his divine love and we become his love for the world. That is why we love him with all our hearts, because he loves us so much.

Now, I'd like to use this heart to show how tis Holy Communion works for us. When we receive Jesus, we love him with all our hearts. But we love him in other ways too.

Look at this (show the heart on my arm): I can love Jesus with all my strength. When I use my strength to help someone, I am showing my love for Jesus.

Look at this (show the heart in my shoe) : I can love Jesus when I walk and run and play. When I play fair, when I am a good sport, when I help a friend, even when I walk to the dinner table when my parents call me, I can show my love for Jesus.

Look at this (show the heart in my hair): I can love Jesus by the way I think. I can choose to do good, I can study and do my homework and learn good things. I can read about Jesus and I can pray. I can show my love for Jesus when I think good thoughts.

Or look at this (show the heat in my wallet): I can love Jesus by the way I spend my money. I can give a gift to someone. I can buy a canned good for my mom and dad to take to church for the poor children. I can share.

So, you see, I can show my love for Jesus in so many ways! Can you think of other ways we can love Jesus? (Hold a heart to my mouth, then ears). While the children think of other ways to show our love for Jesus, I'd invite moms and dads to also think of some ways you show your love for your children as well as for Jesus.

My friends, today you are doing the right thing. You've shown your love by coming to parent classes when the children were learning in their classes. You've done your duty, or have you just begun? These children are so precious to Jesus. We know the world with all its temptations. Jesus didn't come to condemn the world; he didn't even come to stop all the temptations; he came to give us weapons to defend our families from the pervasive evil of people who choose to do wrong instead of doing good. Moses had it right about people, there are a lot of stiff necked, determined to sin, people surrounding us. We need all the help we can get in this struggle.

As parents, you can now choose to drift into complacency or to continue to form these little ones in their faith. You can sleep in, go play, and ignore Christianity. And you

may luck out; your child may still turn out just fine. But do you really want to gamble your children's life? The odds are stacked against complacency.

Tim McGraw sings a song that goes: "*It's drugs or Jesus.*" There are all kinds of "drugs" to sink your family. We adults already know that all the false gods are out there calling you away to place your faith in them. All these little hearts will not always be so open and cooperative; now is your opportunity to be sure that at their core, they know who they are and grow to make the right choices. These are the years to capture your children's imagination, their hearts, so that when they are teenagers and when they are away in college and when they marry, your greatest hopes will be fulfilled for them. It really is drugs or Jesus. We humans find that this body and blood of Jesus at this table is the source of courage, and strength and wisdom and grace. And that's our good news!

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