

*Made in God's Image for Labour, Leisure, and Love*

*Homily for the Easter Vigil*

*April 8, 2023*

Adam, Avan, Daniela, Karen, Max, Kennedy, Matthew, Shan, Stephanie, Timothy, and Zhang Yu, today is your birthday!!!! That is your spiritual birthday. Just as water was at play when you were physically born, so too today. There will be water and lots of water used as you receive the Sacrament of Baptism. Symbolically I am going to drown you in a few minutes. Three times you will go all the way under the water and come up, go under the water, and come up, go under the water, and come up. And with each submersion I will mention one of the names of the Blessed and Holy Trinity as I declare:

***I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit***

With this act you will become Christians. What is a Christian? He or she is a little Christ. The word "Christ" means the "Anointed One" – the one who is God and sent from God to share fully in our human life – because Jesus is also fully human. To be anointed, to be a little Christ, to be a Christian is to begin to share in this life of Christ. Your symbolic drowning is a way to declare that you now have a new life, that welcomes you into your Spiritual Family- the Body of his One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Now I would like to speak to Colleen, Dale, Daniel, Francesca, and Mark. After prayerful consideration and much preparation, you have decided to enter the Catholic Church from Churches that are part of the Protestant Tradition. You are already our brothers and sisters in Christ and therefore we celebrate that you have been validly baptized. The Catechism states:

***All who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers and sisters in the Lord by the children of the Catholic Church<sup>1</sup>***

And while it is true that we are part of the same family, there are Catholic teachings and doctrines of the Christian Faith dating back to Apostolic times which were lost in the tumultuous 16<sup>th</sup> Century by the Protestant Reformers. This evening you are stating that these teachings and doctrines that you did not know as a Protestant are important to you. You are also declaring that the Catholic Church was founded by Jesus Christ, and you want to enter her. Therefore, you will answer with the words "I do" when I ask you this question:

***Do you believe and profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God?***

And now let me address Eva, Juan, Julianna and Kervin. When you were babies, you were born into the family of the Catholic Church by your baptism. But as can happen in life, we can lose

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<sup>1</sup> Catholic Church. (2000). [\*Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#) (2nd Ed., p. 216). United States Catholic Conference.

contact with the family and lose a sense of belonging to the Church. I am so pleased that on this night you will complete your Sacraments of Initiation. May you discover the gift of having been spiritually born into the Catholic Church as you now with a free conscience choose to receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation.

As we gather with all of you this evening, I want us to hear something that beautifully expresses in an economy of words that it means to share in the life of Jesus as part of the Catholic Family. The Catechism states is this way:

***Man is by nature and vocation a religious being. Coming from God, going toward God, man lives a fully human life only if he freely lives by his bond with God<sup>2</sup>***

By nature, and vocation, we men and women are religious beings. The word religious means in this context that we are made for relationships. The Cross indicates that there are three fundamental relationships. With God, the vertical, with ourselves, where the vertical and horizontal meet, and the horizontal plane, which is our relationship with others.

I want to think about this with you a bit more by reference to our first reading from Genesis. This reading is remarkable because it teaches us that we are made to share with God in the stewardship of the world he created. Genesis 1 is a beautiful poem that has an order to it that is clearly indicated by these next slides:

- Day 1: “Let there be light.”
- Day 2: “Let there be water and **sky**”
- Day 3: “Separation between the water and the land”
- Day 4: “The Space is filled with the Sun, moon and stars.
- Day 5: The sky and the seas are filled with creatures of the deep and those that fly.
- Day 6: The land is filled with all these wonderful creatures and at the pinnacle we read these words:

***So God created humankind in his image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.<sup>3</sup>***

For the first time in this passage reference is made to a creature made in God’s image. This creature is unique because the sexes of man and woman are to compliment each other and together they reflect God’s image. This complementarity is beautifully expressed in this saying:

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<sup>2</sup> Catholic Church. (2000). [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) (2nd Ed., p. 18). United States Catholic Conference.

<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition](#) (Ge 1:27). (1993). National Council of Churches of Christ.

***When God took Eve from Adam, he did not take her from his head to lord it over him, nor from his foot to be walked upon by him; he took her from his side to walk with her beneath his arm to be guarded by him and from near his heart to be loved by him and to love him.***

Now out of this understanding of the complementarity of what it means to be made male and female, we see three ways in which human beings reflect God's image. They are made for:

- Labour
- Leisure
- Love

In this story we see God working, and so when he says that the human beings are to be fruitful and to multiply. This does not only mean they are to generate offspring, but that their work is to be meaningful and fruitful. That just as God works to bring order into the universe, so too we are to share in his work. The Catechism says of work.

***Everyone should be able to draw from work the means of providing for his or her life and that of their family, and of serving the human community.***

Part of what makes us like God is that we can labour like God.

We are also told that God made us for leisure. At the end of this passage, we are told that God rested. We also read that each day begins not with the morning but the evening. We are told that there was evening and morning the first day, the second day and so on. Notice as well that human beings were created on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, that they could then enter the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the day of leisure and rest. How important this is for us to remember that we are not only meant for labour. There is to be a day that is set apart in a special way to enter into the rest of God. The leisure of God. Listen to what the Catechism teaches about the relationship between leisure and Sundays:

***The sabbath, which represented the completion of the first creation, has been replaced by Sunday which recalls the new creation inaugurated by the Resurrection of Christ. On Sundays the faithful are bound . . . to abstain from those labors and business concerns which impede the worship to be rendered to God, the joy which is proper to the Lord's Day, or the proper relaxation of mind and body''***

Human beings are made for labour, for leisure and for love. We are told in 1<sup>st</sup> John 4 that God is love and those who abide in God, abide in love. To say that we are made for love brings us back to the Cross. to grow in love of God, a true love of ourselves, and of others, this is what it means to be human.

To be part of the Family that is the Catholic Church is to know we are on this journey together to live as little Christs. Men and women who are discovering the gift of being made in the image of God, as we discover how to order our labour, leisure and loves in ways invite us to share in the very life of God, the blessed Trinity of Labour, Leisure, and Love. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.