

**HOMILY OF CARDINAL CHRISTOPHE PIERRE**  
**APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
**MASS FOR WEDNESDAY OF THE 29<sup>TH</sup> WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**FOURTH COLLEGIAL GATHERING OF BISHOPS**  
**SACRED HEART SEMINARY AND SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**  
**HALES CORNERS, WISCONSIN**  
**OCTOBER 25, 2023**

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am happy to be with you once again. In my years as Nuncio in this country, it seems that Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology has become a home for me. Once more, it is my privilege to convey to you warm sentiments of spiritual closeness and paternal affection from the Holy Father. Greetings to my brother bishops, and thank you again to Father Gómez and Father Knoebel for the welcome that they continue to give me. To all members of the faculty and staff, to the seminarians, and to everyone who is here: greetings in the Lord.

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In the first reading from his Letter to the Romans, Saint Paul exhorts the Christian community: “Present yourselves to God as raised from the dead to life and the parts of your bodies to God as weapons for righteousness.” It is similar to what he says to the Corinthians: “Glorify God in your body” (1 COR 6:20). Paul then gives thanks to God that the Christians have found themselves able to glorify God in this way. As he said, “You have become obedient from the heart to the pattern of teaching to which you were entrusted.”

“Pattern of teaching.” It is interesting to note that the Greek word which Paul uses for “pattern” (τύπων; *typon*), is also used by John the Evangelist to signify the “mark” of the nails in Jesus’ hands following the resurrection (JOHN 20:25). This connection is interesting, because the mark of the nails signifies the supreme way in which Jesus *glorified God in his body*. Jesus himself is the living embodiment of that “pattern of teaching” we are to follow in virtue of our Baptism. Like Jesus, we glorify God in our bodies. This does not refer only to the way we use the physical substance of our bodies, but that we glorify God precisely in and through our humanity. Any “gnostic” or “dualistic” tendency to distance ourselves from our bodies, or from the full reality of our humanity, in order to serve God with greater “purity”: this amounts to a denial, or at least a diminishing, of the incarnation. God’s own Son glorified the Father, not by becoming “angelic”, but by being fully human, fully incarnate, and *worshipping God with his body*.

This provides an important reminder of how we are to celebrate the Eucharist. In this time of Eucharistic revival, we should be careful to avoid a kind of gnostic or dualistic approach to the Eucharist. In other words, to treat the Eucharist in an excessively ethereal manner, as if it is a Sacrament so separated

from our daily humanity, so “other”, that the real presence of Christ is stripped of its practical consequences for our lives. If we treat the Eucharist in this way, then it will be difficult for Christ’s presence to make a difference in our communion with our fellow believers. And if communion among Catholics is not enriched, then how will we be able to evangelize those are not part of our Eucharistic assemblies?

To believe and celebrate the Eucharist as a Sacrament of our Lord’s incarnation – a Sacrament that unites God’s divinity with our humanity – is to say “yes” to the kind of life that Jesus himself lived. Jesus does not teach, nor does he model, a “sanitized” form of religion. Rather, Jesus encounters people, connecting with them in all of their humanity: weaknesses, differences, infirmities, and struggles included. It is precisely through his human contact with sinners that he brings about redemption.

Such an approach led our Lord ultimately to the Cross. But even before Calvary, this approach constituted the “daily cross” that he exhorted his followers to carry. This will always be part of our daily cross: to bring the real presence of Christ, which we encounter in the Sacrament, into our relationships with the people with whom we share this earthly journey.

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Our Lord asks in the Gospel reading: “Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute the food allowance at the proper time?” Let *us* be those faithful stewards. Let us be obedient from the heart to the pattern of teaching to which we were entrusted by our Baptism. Let us glorify God in our bodies in communion with our brothers and sisters in the faith. And let us take the love of Christ to those who do not yet know him.