



Source and Summit

Sample Homily

Everything In Its Place

If we were to ask people what are the most important or special moments of their lifetimes, you would expect to hear them talk about that day they first drove a car on their own and how it brought them a sense of freedom. Or they'd share about their graduation from high school or college and how that signified them entering a new stage in life. Many would talk about their wedding day and the joy of being united in love forever. I am sure others would tell about the birth of a child and being overwhelmed with both delight and a newfound sense of purpose.

All of these significant moments are highpoints in our lives. Moments to which we look forward as we plan what our life will be like once we graduate, get married, or have kids. Highpoints become a part of us and recollections of these Highpoints carry us through tough times, like the terrible twos, troublesome teens, or the seven year itch. Highpoints are special, but actually are not unique. Most people drive and graduate school, many marry and become parents. Part of what makes Highpoints special for each one of us is that they are joint accomplishments, supported by a family and shared with a community.

We are all here in church today to experience another Highpoint, something which is described as a summit, as the source and summit of our spiritual lives. I'm speaking of the Eucharist. What does regular routine weekly mass have in common with these once in a lifetime highpoints like graduation or a wedding?

The Eucharist is also a celebration. In fact the word "Eucharist" comes from the ancient Greek word *eucharistia*, which means to "give thanks". Here we experience the presence of Christ in the people around us, the word proclaimed from the ambo, the priest and most importantly, the blessed sacrament itself which is the presence of Christ given to us. That alone is cause for celebration!

Just like a wedding is more than a party, the mass has a much deeper meaning than a mere community gathering. Like a graduation or wedding brings new meaning and direction to our lives, the Mass points to and connects us with the ultimate source of meaning for our lives, our Triune God. Every mass is special and often reminds us of significant, sacramental moments, like first communions, confirmations, weddings, and baptisms.

The Eucharist is also a place where we can find solace and comfort in our tough times. Acknowledging our sins, accepting the support of the community, and tapping into the strength of this centuries old ritual brings us perspective, stability, and peace.

Just like our personal Highpoints are really a joint success, the grace of the Eucharist is a shared Highpoint - a Summit magnified by the mutual prayers of the community around us. Just as the Highpoint of childbirth connects us to the cyclical pattern of our natural world, the cyclical pattern of the liturgical year reinforces our connection to creation and to Our Creator. These are just a few of the ways that the Eucharist is a highpoint, the source and summit of our spiritual lives. A moment so special it is not diminished by weekly or daily participation.

However, there is one thing that can diminish the impact and import of the Highpoint of Mass: our absence. For good reasons, many of us have refrained from in person participation in the Eucharist over the last year. Although we've been dispensed from the obligation, depending how we've filled that time, this absence may not be making our heart grow fonder, but may in fact dim our appreciation.

As we look forward, hopefully soon, to the ability to fully and freely participate in our world and economy, one good interim step would be to start at the top: at the summit of our spiritual lives: the mass. As our diocese and parishes have adjusted cleaning and space requirements to keep everyone safe, many have become comfortable returning to in person participation.

Connecting ourselves to the source and summit of our lives as Roman Catholic followers of Christ will connect us to our loving Father and a supportive community. When we meet God face to face in the Highpoint of the Mass, everything else will simply fall into their proper place.