

**FATHER MARK SCHULTE**  
**HOMILY**  
**TWENTY THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C)**  
**September 7, 2025**

**“Eucharistic Planning”**

My Brothers and Sisters, most people make plans for various activities in their lives, plans to complete school, plans for gainful employment, plans for marriage, plans for vocations, and so on. Almost everyone understands the importance of planning. There is a common colloquial saying, “He who does not plan to succeed automatically plans to fail”.

If we recognize that planning is important in the various activities of our lives, then planning to succeed in our spiritual life is of utmost importance as well. Jesus emphasizes the importance of spiritual planning in today’s Gospel. In it Jesus lays out three crucial criteria that one must engage in if they hope to be His disciple (Lk 14:25-33).

The first is one of relationship, our relationship with Jesus. Our relationship with Jesus must take priority over all other relationships, even those that we have with our family members. Any relationship that inhibits us from completely following Christ must be avoided or dealt with cautiously.

The second one is the need to accept our daily crosses, that suffering which comes from being a human in a world that is toxic to spirituality. When we accept our crosses lovingly for Christ, we become united to Him and His cross in a most intimate way, strengthening our relationship with Jesus.

And the third criteria is the renunciation of material possessions, often referred to as materialism, the placing of things of this world, such as pleasure, objects, and money above our relationship with God. The common theme of relationship runs through all three of these important measures.

Each of these three criteria effect our relationship with Jesus in a unique way. When Jesus gave these three principles to the people of His day, He was present to them, physically present. They could see him, hear Him, and in some instances they could even touch Him, as He did to those whom He healed (Lk 6-19). We, in our time, do not have this unique privilege of being physically present to Jesus. But Jesus did say that even though He would ascend into heaven, out of the sight of His disciples and hence His Church, He would always be with them (Mt 28:20). Jesus has kept His promise by being present to His Church in the Holy Eucharist, the consecrated bread and wine.

Many Christians are completely unaware of this Eucharistic presence through no fault of their own. They are simply waiting to discover Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. But unfortunately, there are many Catholic Christians that are aware of it but have lost their faith in our Lord’s true presence in the Holy Eucharist. They have severed this relationship and no longer receive Him in Holy Communion. The discipleship that Jesus emphasized, they no longer share in.

We began by saying that planning is very important, and Jesus emphasized this in the Gospel. We also said that He who does not plan to succeed has already planned to fail.

And again we said that spiritual planning is critical to our faith life, especially in our relationship with Jesus. If we do not wish to lose our faith in Jesus, especially Jesus present in the Holy Eucharist, then how are we planning to keep that faith alive?

Faith in the Holy Eucharist is a tenuous matter, and steps must be taken to foster it, or it will be lost. The basis of faith in general is the virtue of humility. Faith in the Eucharist must be approached with humility. Unfortunately, there have been a number of practices that the Church permits that can through human weakness undermine humility. A number of these practices involve taking our focus off of Jesus in the Eucharist and then placing that focus on ourselves, which is a kind of Anthro centrism over Christo centrism. Jesus said to the pharisees, “you pharisees search far and wide to make a convert then turn him into a devil” (Mt 23:15). In some ways Jesus could just as well be talking about some members in the Church hierarchy in our times.

I am going to offer several very simple practices, practices that have been used in the Church for over 1000 years with great results, that when incorporated into your spiritual planning, will help strengthen your relationship with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Incorporate them if you wish. I am merely attempting to lead the horse to water, but as we know the horse must choose to drink. Everyone is at a different place on the learning curve, and many are already using these practices.

Choose to receive the Holy Eucharist on your tongue. When you do this the priest is feeding you as a father feeds his child. It becomes a more humble act on the part of the recipient and humility fosters faith. Not only that, the profanation of the sacred host will occur much less when received on the tongue. It is not uncommon for sacred hosts to be found in the missalettes deposited there by non-believers who receive communion in the hand.

If at all possible, receive holy Communion from a priest. When this is done you are receiving communion from Jesus Himself, who is fully present in the priest who acts in *Persona Christi*. In addition, this confirms the priest in his priesthood as a Father feeding his children at the table.

If you can receive Holy Communion while kneeling, this becomes an act of adoration to Jesus truly present in the Holy Eucharist.

Spend time in prayer before Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. This will involve some extra planning. This can take place before or after work, school, or in daily Mass.

Always be aware that Jesus is present in the tabernacle and then conduct yourself accordingly, remembering that we are guests in His house.

Make an act of adoration with the sign of the cross when you drive by a Catholic Church, knowing that Jesus is reserved there in the tabernacle. This will also foster faith in your children who will ask why you are doing this.

If you incorporate these simple yet profound practices in your spiritual planning repertoire, your relationship with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist will grow stronger, and that is what it is all about.