

Mt 10:26-33; Jer 20:10-13; Rom 5:12-15 Wedding of Love and Life

Welcome to the wedding! Of who? Of you...and Jesus...by the bond of the Holy Eucharist. And do we ever need it!

Because Jesus is preparing us. Sending us. And warning us: your mission won't come easy.

Our message of love, justice and peace...when we love others the way Jesus loves us...for some, it's a real threat. Like Jesus said, *You will be hated by all because of my name* (Mt 10:22). But *be not afraid* (Mt 10:26).

In the first reading, the prophet Jeremiah was warning God's people that they could avoid the coming destruction (from Babylon), if they followed God's laws. But they didn't like the message. They wanted to kill him (Jer 20:10).

But he found his strength by trusting in the Lord: *the Lord is with me like a mighty champion* (Jer 20:11)...*for he has rescued the life of the poor from the power of the wicked!* (Jer 20:13).

So, let us trust. Trust in the Lord. Because, if God cares for the sparrows, how much more will He not care for us? And if God knows the number of hairs on our heads, He obviously knows our every need! (Mt 10:29-30).

But there is one thing we must fear: *do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna* (Mt 10:28). That is the devil.

Yet we can overcome the devil. How? With the virtue we call, *fear of the Lord*.

That is when we choose to avoid sin, not because we want salvation, not because we feel good about it, but simply because we love God so much, we are afraid to disappoint Him.

The key is love. For that kind of love, we need to have Christ formed within us (Gal 4:19).

And for that we have the Holy Eucharist through which Jesus loves us and Jesus comes to live inside of us. He gives us love! And He gives us life!

It began like this: In the garden of Eden, God cast a deep sleep on the man, took one of his ribs and formed it into a woman, and brought her to the man (Gen 2:21-22).

The bible says, *That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body* (Gen 2:24).

So, there are three steps in the sacrament of marriage: (1) The man leaves his father and mother.

(2) The man cleaves to his wife. The Catechism says the spouses seal their consent by offering their lives to each other (CCC 1621).

And (3) they become one flesh. When a husband and wife are first joined together in the marital embrace (physically and intimately), they give their lives completely and totally to each other. The marital relationship is “consummated.”

That means, every time they engage again in the marital embrace (intimacy and sex), they renew their wedding vows, and they give their lives completely and totally to each other, just as on the day of their wedding.

Jesus did the same for us! (1) Jesus left His Heavenly Father to become human, and Jesus left His earthy Mother, the Virgin Mary, to establish His own household, the Church.

(2) Jesus cleaved Himself to His bride, us, when He freely offered Himself completely for us on that cross for our salvation. He handed over His spirit saying *It is finished* (Jn 19:30). In other words, it is consummated!

And (3) through the sacrifice of the cross, Jesus made Himself one with us. Because Jesus took on the sins of the world, allowing believers to be reconciled—made one--with God.

So, the Holy Eucharist is like the sacrament of Marriage. Because we give and receive both love and life.

A husband and wife are continually making present their marriage covenant, when they love each other and when they are physically intimate thereby giving life—by bringing a newborn child into the world.

In our celebration of the Holy Eucharist, we are continually making present Jesus' sacrifice on that cross. We offer it up to God for our salvation.

Did you realize that? Right now, you are going to offer up Jesus' sacrifice on that cross for your salvation!

Like St. Ambrose said, *As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so the Church was born from the pierced heart of Jesus hanging dead (sleeping) on the cross.*

Dead on the cross His side was pierced. And from His side poured forth water—the waters of baptism; and blood—the Blood of the Holy Eucharist.

It is through the waters of baptism that we become members of the Body of Christ. And it is through the Blood of Christ that we receive Christ's total giving of Himself to us—the gift of life.

When a wife receives the husband into her body, she is receiving his love and his very life into her—for the conception of a new life.

When we receive Jesus into our bodies, what are we receiving? We are receiving His love. *No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends* (Jn 15:13).

When we receive Jesus into our bodies, what are we receiving? We are receiving His life— life itself: *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life* (Jn 6:54). We receive God's own life into ourselves (Jn 6:56).

That is what the sacrament of marriage is all about--giving love and creating life. That is what the Holy Eucharist is all about—Jesus gives us His love and Jesus gives us His life.

But that's not all. Because that, is what God created us to do. Like He said, *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you* (Jer 1:5).

God created us in His own image (Gen 1:27). God is love. And because he is love, he gives us life.

So we are most like God when we love and when we create life. God sent us into this world to do that. And Jesus sends us out through those doors to do that: to love and to give life.

So be not afraid. Because if we trust completely in Jesus...if we let Jesus Christ love us and give us life...then everything is possible. We can do anything!

We can acknowledge Jesus before others so that He will acknowledge us before God (Mt 10:33). We can preach the Good News in word and deed. And we can drive out demons and heal the sick in Jesus' name (Mk 16:17-18):

The demons of pornography, alcohol & drugs; the demons of homelessness, poverty and injustice; and the demons of illness, depression and sin...we can do something about it.

We can pray for them. We can be there for them. And we can help them. Jesus working through us, with us and in us. And us, working through Him, with Him and in Him!

Let us pray: Lord Jesus we are not afraid. Because we are married to You by the bond of the Holy Eucharist. You gave us Your love. And You gave us your life.

Now send us on our mission to drive out demons and heal the sick by sharing Your love and Your life with anyone in need.