

THE BEAUTY OF THE MASS—5

The roots of the Mass lay in the Last Supper, the Passover meal that Jesus shared with his friends. Jesus instituted the Mass or the Eucharist at the Last Supper (cf. Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:17-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-25). The Second Vatican Council's document on the Sacred Liturgy states that Jesus gave us the Eucharist *“in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until He should come again, and so entrust to His beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which ‘Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us’”* (SC-47).

When Jesus said to His Apostles, *“Do this in memory of me,”* we believe Jesus meant those words for each one of us, not just the priest.

So Sunday Mass is a very solemn obligation. Celebrating Sunday Mass is the way that we fulfill the Third Commandment: *“Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.”* We need to gather on Sunday and celebrate the Holy Eucharist so that we don't forget who we are and whose we are. We need to gather in order to worship and thank God for His goodness and mercy. We need to come together and receive Christ in His holy Word and his holy Body and Blood so that we will have the wisdom, the strength, the support, the encouragement that the Mass offers in order to bring Christ to the world.

The celebration of the Eucharist is the action both of Christ and His Church. As the document *“The Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery”* teaches us, *“In the Eucharist, Christ perpetuates in an un-bloody manner the sacrifice offered on the cross, offering Himself to the Father for the world’s salvation through the ministry of priests. The Church, the Spouse and minister of Christ, performs together with Him the role of priest and victim, offers Him to the Father*

and at the same time, makes a total offering of herself together with Him.”

At Mass, we unite ourselves to the sacrifice of Christ and are nourished by His sacrificial Body and Blood that strengthens us to live Christ’s sacrificial love in our world: to bring justice to our world and to witness to the truth by feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked and visiting prisoners and the sick.

When we come to Mass, we expect the celebrant and the other liturgical ministers to be prepared and competent. However, they are not the only source of life for our parish worship. All parish members must be responsible for the quality of worship. It is no longer O.K. to wander into church and sit passively in the pew. We must participate.

When people say they don’t get anything out of Mass, they are worshipping for the wrong reasons. We come to give something, or better, we come to give ourselves to and with Christ, in thanks to God for all that God has given us.

It is our responsibility to participate in Liturgy. This means that all of us must work to make the Liturgy prayerful and meaningful. “*Liturgy*” means “*public work*” or the “*work of the people.*” All of us must work at making the Mass an act of praise and thanksgiving to God through and with Christ, His Son. This means that each one of us must prepare and participate in the sacred liturgy in a “*full, conscious and active*” way.

Current Event article:

POPE WEIGHS IN ON CIVIL UNIONS FOR GAYS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responds to news stories about the pope endorsing civil unions for homosexuals:

In a new documentary about Pope Francis, “Francesco,” the Holy Father comments on homosexuals. “Homosexual people have the right to be in a family. They are children of God. You can’t kick someone out of a family, nor make their life miserable for this. What we have to have is a civil union law; that way they are legally covered.”

The Vatican website posts a news release on the movie but makes no mention of the pope’s reflections on homosexuals. Is it because what he said does not change Church doctrine? Or is it because they want to avoid controversy? The former is true and the latter may also be.

Before commenting on what the pope said, it is important to recognize what he did not say. He did not endorse gay marriage. That is because he cannot: It would be against everything he has previously said, and it would conflict with official Church teachings on the subject.

In 2010, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the Archbishop of Buenos Aires (and future Pope Francis), mobilized Catholics to defeat a law affirming gay marriage. Though he failed in his quest, he was quite blunt about his opposition to same-sex marriage.

“At stake is the identity and survival of the family: father, mother and children. At stake are the lives of many children who will be discriminated against in advance, and deprived of their human development given by a father and a mother and willed by God. At stake is the total rejection of God’s law engraved in our hearts.”

Who was behind the push for gay marriage? Satan.

“Let us not be naive: this is not simply a political struggle, but it is an attempt to destroy God’s plan. It is not just a bill (a mere instrument) but a ‘move’ of the father of lies who seeks to confuse and deceive the children of God.” The “father of lies” whom he speaks of is the Devil.

The would-be pope tried to work out a compromise with Argentinean authorities at the time. That is why he floated the idea of recognizing

civil unions. But it was clear that would not satisfy, so nothing came of it.

The pope's statement about homosexuals having a right to be in a family, and that they cannot be kicked out, is of course true. He was referring to what sociologists call the "family of orientation," meaning the family we were born into. He was not referring to what is called the "family of procreation," meaning the family we make as adults.

To be exact, homosexual acts cannot result in procreation, which is why the Church teaches that homosexuality is intrinsically disordered. Indeed, homosexuals owe their very existence to opposite-sex unions. Moreover, the pope knows that "gay families" are not legitimate.

Two years ago, Pope Francis said only heterosexuals can form a family. "It is painful to say this today: People speak of varied families, of various kinds of families," but "the family [as] man and woman in the image of God is the only one."

If the pope did not change any Church teaching on homosexuality or marriage, why did he make the remarks attributed to him in the documentary?

This appears to be one more instance where he is trying to reach out to homosexuals, letting them know that their sexual status does not disqualify them from God's love. There is a huge difference, however, between the sexual status of an individual, and the social status of an institution, such as marriage and the family. The pope knows the difference, even if some of his gay fans do not.

It would be helpful for the Vatican to clarify what the pope meant. The content of his remarks is not problematic, but the lack of context is. The laity need clarity, not confusion.