

“I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord.”

These words from our responsorial psalm today express in a powerful way what we are celebrating today. Today we celebrate the amazing feast of Corpus Christi — the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. And, connected with this feast, we celebrate the certification of you new spiritual directors and graduates of the St. Peter Upon the Water spiritual direction program. I think these two celebrations are not unrelated or merely coincidental. No. The celebration of this graduation and certification is a living expression of the meaning of Corpus Christi!

Our Pope emeritus, Benedict XVI, commented a few years ago that the full meaning of the Holy Eucharist was known when, after receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, we would go forth, as disciples and missionaries, bringing God’s charity into the world. In other words, we don’t receive the Eucharist as something to be kept only for ourselves, but as something that must come alive in the actions of bringing God’s restoring love into the world in an active way! This can be done in material ways, of course, like feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and welcoming the stranger. We must do these things. But it is also known through accompanying people in their life’s journeys toward greater union with God and the discovery of their own vocations of love and service. And this is where the ministry of the spiritual director becomes an action of love, coming forth from the Body of Christ!

“Taking up the cup of salvation” is the proper response to the gift of Christ’s presence among us. To take up the cup of salvation is to embrace Christ’s own work of salvation through personal sacrifice, and being available to heal the wounds and divisions affecting people’s hearts. In addition to all that you already do for the good of God’s people, you are now taking up this crucial ministry, and the joys and sufferings that will come with it.

The second part of our response today was, “and call on the name of the Lord.” If you are to be an effective spiritual director, you must first call upon the name of the Lord, yourself! You must dispose yourself to prayer, to discernment, to listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit and the movements of grace in your own hearts. That means, in a practical way, taking time for prayer each day. Celebrating the sacred liturgy of the church often. Taking on spiritual disciplines like fasting, spiritual reading, and being in spiritual direction yourself! I encourage you to have a regular confessor for yourself, and to take time to come before the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament whenever possible. In these ways, you will call upon the name of the Lord while you are taking up the cup of salvation. You will live the meaning of this great feast!

Last year, at this Feast of Corpus Christi, Pope Francis focused on remembering the meaning of the Holy Eucharist. He said:

“we recall God’s love for us, which gives us strength and support on our journey. This is why the Eucharistic commemoration does us so much good: it is not an abstract, cold and superficial memory, but a living remembrance that comforts us with God’s love. The Eucharist is flavored with Jesus’ words and deeds, the taste of his Passion, the fragrance of his Spirit. When we receive it, our hearts are overcome with the certainty of Jesus’ love.

We need to help the many to “know the certainty of Jesus’ love.” We do this by “taking up the cup of salvation, and calling on the name of the Lord.”