

Homily – Archdiocesan Assembly 2016

November 5, 2016

The Eucharist both a **sign** and a **source** of our unity as Catholics. It is a **sign** of our unity because we gather -- united as Church -- from diverse backgrounds to worship and pray as sisters and brothers in the Lord. The Eucharist also has the power to reconcile us to one another, to strengthen and deepen our unity.

We are nearing the end of a brutal, fiercely partisan national electoral campaign. It has revealed our deeply divided and polarized society in very great need of healing and reconciliation. There are also divisions within the Church between “conservatives” and “liberals,” each faction claiming to be the only authentic Catholics. We need personal and pastoral conversion. We are challenged to embrace the living word of God, especially the teaching and example of Jesus in the gospel. Before we can be effective evangelizers, we ourselves need God’s healing love, mercy, and compassion. We are also to be as merciful to others as our heavenly Father is. Embracing the gospel, Pope Francis has called us to authentic encounter, dialogue, and inclusion. This requires mutual respect and trust. We need to build bridges, not walls!

The Holy Spirit will guide us in this difficult task. It is God's will. We are all sinners, in need of his forgiveness. Pope Francis said recently: "You cannot be a Christian without living like a Christian ...without practicing the Beatitudes. . . It is hypocrisy to call yourself a Christian and chase away a refugee or someone seeking help, someone who is hungry or thirsty, toss out someone who is in need of [your] help."

We need the Holy Spirit's gifts of wisdom, understanding, courage. St. John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict, and Pope Francis have all pointed out clearly that there is no opposition between pro-life issues –from conception to natural death -- and social justice issues. We need to keep this broad spectrum of issues in mind even though someone may be more inclined to focus on one specific issue than another at a given time. Authentic Christians are committed to both pro-life and social justice issues.

St. Paul shows his love for the Philippian Christians in his Letter. While Paul is grateful for the support he has received from them, he also provides eloquent witness of his utter dependence above all upon God. He assures them – and us this morning! -- that "God will fully supply whatever you need" to follow Jesus on our

journey through life. This is the work of the Holy Spirit within and among us. *Ven, Holy Spirit, ven!*

Our responsorial psalm reminds us that God is pleased with the one “who is gracious and lends, who conducts [his or her] affairs with justice.” Such a person is steadfast and shall not fear the future because generosity in sharing one’s gifts and blessings with the poor because this generosity will endure forever.

That is also the message of today’s gospel. Jesus puts a stark choice before us: you cannot serve God and mammon. The Pharisees loved money and sneered at Jesus. He reminds them -- and us! -- that God knows our hearts, our innermost thoughts, values, and attitudes. Be generous with sharing your gifts and blessings with others. This is not only a matter of donations of our treasure but also our time and talents in service of the poor.

Jesus also tells us that “the person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones.” He is not advocating grand gestures so much as simple, spontaneous, daily actions. Let us be united in deepening our relationships with one another and striving for healing and reconciliation in our society!