

Bulletin Bites

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*Please distribute to the pastor, vicars and deacons in the parish
and to the person who produces the bulletin.*

June 3, 2018

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood

Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

Option 1

“Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?”

Jesus told two of his disciples, “Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him.” The disciples knew that jugs of water are carried by women. A man carrying a water jug would be unusual, a sign to follow him. At the Passover meal Jesus “Took bread, said the blessing, broke it, gave it to them, and said, ‘Take it; this is my body.’” Then “He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant.’” Like the man carrying a jug of water this was very unusual. It was a sign to follow him; a memorial of his life and what was soon to happen. The disciples believed in Jesus. They ate the bread and believed it was His Body. They drank the wine and believed it was His Blood. After His crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension they understand the New Covenant. They believed in the true presence of Jesus in what appeared to be bread and wine. They suffered and sacrificed much to follow Jesus. Do we truly believe? Do we follow Jesus?

Option 2

“Then, after singing a hymn, they went to the Mount of Olives”

Thank you! Two words that, when said sincerely, say so much to the person who hears them and much more about the person who speaks them. They acknowledge the existence of someone other than ourselves and they communicate to that person we are aware of an act or words that benefit us; an act or words restrained that might have caused us harm or pain; an act or words of instruction, caution or reprimand that have made us a better person. ***Thank you!*** Two words that make others feel accepted and appreciated. Yet, they are two words that often go unspoken because we assume people know we mean or intend them. At the Last Supper Jesus left for us a Memorial of His love. He blessed bread and wine and said ***Thank you!*** to the Father. He gave the disciples, and us, His Body and Blood as a New Covenant. He taught us to say ***Thank you!*** to God for all He has given to us and to all who love us as He did. Do we say ***Thank you!*** enough? Try it, you'll like it! I ***thank you*** for reading and reflecting on these words.

June 10, 2018
Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Gospel Mark 3:20-35

Option 1

**When his relatives heard of this they set out to seize him, for they said,
“He is out of his mind.”**

Jesus, Mary and Joseph are rightly referred to as “The Holy Family.” But they were not “holy” because they were isolated from their ancestors, collateral relatives and extended family. They were an integral part of the small town of Nazareth that included the parents of Joseph and Mary and their brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. We do not know if Joseph and Mary had brothers and sisters, but we know Mary had a cousin named Elizabeth. St. Matthew tells us that when the relatives of Jesus heard that he was doing and saying things that were upsetting to the Jewish and Roman authorities, they would have been concerned about Jesus, but also for themselves. St. Matthew does not identify the relatives who came to seize Jesus, but writes simply that Jesus used a parable to help them understand him and to calm their fears. He pointed out that everything he did and said confronted evil, so he could not be from the source of evil. They understood that “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” Do we?

Option 2

**“How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom or house is divided against itself,
that kingdom or house cannot stand.”**

During the life of Joseph, Mary and Jesus Nazareth was a small village of approximately four hundred people, including several generations of a few families. We do not know for certain that Joseph and Mary had brothers and sisters, but it is probable. The grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins of Jesus knew him well. When the scribes came from Jerusalem and cried “He is possessed by Beelzebul” to accuse him of being evil, his relatives would have become concerned for his safety and their own. Jesus knew that the scribes and his relatives were well aware that division made families and kingdoms vulnerable; he knew he had neither done nor said anything evil; he knew the scribes could not prove otherwise; he could only hope his relatives would understand he could not stop doing good and proclaiming the Kingdom of God, regardless of the consequences. He hopes that we understand and are willing to imitate him.

June 17, 2018
Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
Mark 4:26-34

Option 1

“With many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it.”

Jesus used parables, short stories with images of things, places and the daily life of the people of his day to convey TRUTHS that they were not able to fully understand because of their lack of education and the natural limits of human ability to comprehend transcendent reality. Other than the “scribes” that Jesus often mentions along with the “chief priest and Pharisees,” most people did not read and write. There were no newspapers, books, radio, television, computers, Internet, cell phones or tablets with wifi access. People communicated face to face. They spoke to each other. They talked about their life, business, faith and the world in which they lived. They often

used images, stories, and parables because they were easier to remember than a complicated academic dissertation. St. Mark records Jesus telling the parable of the mustard seed to teach about the Kingdom of God. He did not eliminate the mystery about the Kingdom, but those who heard Him learned the TRUTH that it included them. And it includes us. What a great story.

Option 2

“This is how it is with the kingdom of God . . .”

Ever since the first human being considered the possibility of life after death there have been speculations and theories about what such life would be. Various cultures and religions have given it names such as Nirvana [Buddhist], Tian [Chinese], Heaven [Christian]. In two parables Jesus teaches the people of his day, and us, so we are “able to understand it,” about the “Kingdom of God.” He is talking about the “Kingdom” that we pray will “come on earth as it is in heaven” every time we say the Our Father. He tells us that we must be like small seeds that are scattered and grow into large plants and produce much bounty. In allegorical terms he is proclaiming that God created us with many talents, abilities and gifts that He expects us to spend a lifetime to discover, accept, develop and use for OUR OWN benefit and enjoyment, AND for the benefit and enjoyment of OTHERS so His Kingdom will “come, one earth as it is in heaven.”

June 24, 2018

Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

Luke 1:57-66, 80

Option 1

“The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel.”

Hollywood productions about Jesus that included John the Baptist understandably lead many to believe that the Baptist was beheaded in Herod's palace in Jerusalem. However, Herod's father, Herod the Great, had several strategically located palace-fortresses outside of Jerusalem: *Herodium*, west of Jerusalem, *Masada*, overlooking the western shore of the Dead Sea, and *Machaerus*, east of the Dead Sea in what is now the country of Jordan. It was in Machaerus that John was beheaded by Herod because he grew up “strong in spirit” and preached to his followers, and to people with power, to “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” John was not violent; he was not hateful; he preached the truth; and he called people to “repent.” Repentance requires change. No one likes change. We do not like the person who calls us to change. John was imprisoned and beheaded at *Machaerus* because he would not shut up. Are we willing to change? Are we willing to call others to change, even people with power? Are we willing to suffer the consequences? Or do we remain silent? What will we say to Jesus?

Option 2

The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel.

John is an enigmatic Biblical figure. His mother Elizabeth is a cousin of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. His father, Zecharia, a descendant of Aaron, the brother of Moses, of the Tribe of Levi was entitled to one day enter the Temple in Jerusalem as a priest to offer sacrifice. He learned the Torah and prepared for when he would enter the Temple. Like his cousin Jesus, he

observed the silly, stupid, senseless and sinful things in the world around him and he called for repentance, especially by the Jewish leaders. John understood God's command to love Him, and love our neighbors as ourselves. He gave up the trappings of privilege, pomp and circumstance and a chance to enter the temple. He was not politically correct. He lived a simple lifestyle in the desert and attracted many people to his call for change and baptism of repentance. He prepared the way for Jesus to command us to love our enemies and love one another as He loved us. Do we celebrate who John was and what he did? Are we willing to imitate him?