

Fr. John Sassani
Homily Given October 16, 2011
Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Liturgical Year A

I'm a shy person, yet I talk a lot. I have lots of conversations with people. This past week, besides preaching last weekend, I:

- Gave a talk to a group of women in Holliston;
- Spoke to the First Communion parents with Rosemary Seibold and Ginny and Paul Arpino;
- Presented to the priests of our diocese in the South Region;
- And spoke on Sunday night to the Confirmation students.

You'd never know I was shy!

But something is constantly lurking behind what I say and how I say it: namely, a mature understanding of our Catholic faith. This requires not only knowledge, but conviction. It requires understanding our faith and a real personal commitment to it.

This was no less true for Jesus. In today's gospel, he's in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, just days before his crucifixion. The plotting for Jesus' undoing is ripe in the gospel. The Pharisees and Herodians, who would not ordinarily be allies, are single-minded in their opposition to Jesus. Jesus' response to their question is not a first articulation of the separation of church and state. Rather, it's a challenge to be clear about our convictions.

That's what I hope lurks behind the things I say - here and in the various places I preach. My convictions. Otherwise, it's a lot of blah, blah, blah. But the opportunity to articulate my convictions as a Catholic priest ends up strengthening and clarifying my convictions. That was one of the real blessings for those who came to programs like the parent meetings for the sacraments, or to Bible Study, to the Parish Faith Festival, to ARISE Together in Christ, and the new program we'll be starting in the spring called Why Catholic. It is a real blessing for those who have conversations with family and friends about faith.

The Sunday Eucharist is an opportunity to have our Christian convictions strengthened. By the witness of other people of conviction coming. By the Word of Christ being spoken here in the gospel and hopefully in the sermon. By Christ bringing his convictions to us as a gift when he comes in Holy Communion, so that we leave the Mass as the sacrament of his conviction in the world.