

Pastor's Thoughts

Liturgical Year 2023 - The Second Week in Ordinary Time

Behold the Lamb of God

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ & Friends of St. John Vianney:

This upcoming Sunday we celebrate the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time. The Gospel reading at Mass (John 1:29-34) recounts St. John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus: Upon rising up from the waters of baptism in the River Jordan, John recognizes the Lord in a new way: *Behold, the Lamb of God...I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him.* At each and every holy Eucharist that we celebrate we hear these same words of testimony spoken to us as Christ's Body and Blood are presented...*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.* Jesus presents himself to us in the words of the priest and in the sacred actions of liturgy at this point in the Mass. This is Jesus, the Lamb of God. He is really and truly before us. He is inviting us to share in His supper. How do we see him? How do we recognize him? How do we welcome him? Each and every holy Eucharist is a sacred testimony of Christ's eucharistic presence in our lives.

With the passage of time we begin to see more clearly how God is working in us, in our hearts, homes and families. Life has many twists and turns...which sanctify us. You've heard me speak on occasion how one thing in life prepares us for the next; and that there is no such thing as a 'coincidence'. We move from call to call. Hopefully we move with openness, trust and peace. The calls we have are movements and moments of God's grace. They are little epiphanies that help us see the Lord and respond to Him with faith and love: *To you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy...Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

-1 Corinthians 1:2-3. Christ's presence and our participation in His Eucharist strengthens our faith day by day until we come to the end of our earthly pilgrimage and the fulfillment of our hope for eternal life in Heaven. People who touch our lives, events and experiences we have, shape who we are today (members of God's family) and prepare us for who we hope to be tomorrow (members of God's Kingdom).

Our beloved Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI, *God's peace and mercy be upon him*, in 2006 composed a spiritual testament about his life: *Stand Firm in the Faith...* To read it go to www.vatican.va or click here: <https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/elezione/documents/testamento-spirituale-bxvi.html> I read it this past week and was moved by Pope Benedict's personal testimony about the presence of Christ in his life. With gratitude, Benedict fondly recalls people and experiences that had shaped his life, his faith, his vocation, and his love for God. He acknowledged his brokenness, addressing people he had wronged; and asked for their forgiveness. Pope Benedict expresses how he encountered Jesus, the Lamb of God, leading, guiding and loving him throughout his lifetime. Like St John the Baptist who points us in the direction of the Lord in Sunday's Gospel (upcoming), Pope Benedict's personal testament (a statement of gratitude and grace) also points us to Christ.

Starting next Monday - January 16th, as in years past I will be away visiting the Oregon coast. Father Fred, SJ will be joining us next weekend for Confessions and Mass. Unfortunately, I will miss the Cookie/Bake Sale. Should any of you wish to send Father Fred home with cookies for the Bellarmine Jesuit Community, I can tell you that they ❤️ soft, chewy cookies ❤️ From one baker to another...brownie mix makes the best soft and chewy cookies. Father Fred has me well trained on that baking tip. 🍪 🍪 😊

Please pray for me while I'm gone...I'll be back the weekend of January 28th & 29th.

May God's peace, joy and love be with you.

Fr. David

Positivity, Relator, Futuristic, Developer, Empathy

Personal Religious Faith Demands Engagement!