

11th Sunday (B)

17th June 2018

‘Sacred Heart — and the Holy Eucharist’

Ezek 17: the cedar ... I will plant ...

Ps 91: the just will flourish like the palm tree ... like a Lebanon cedar

2Cor: living in the body, or exiled from it, we are intent on pleasing Him

Mk 4: 26–34: the seed is sprouting & growing; how, he does not know.

The month of June is the month dedicated each year to prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus — much as May is dedicated to Our Lady, or October to the Holy Rosary, or November to the Holy Souls. I have brought out, again, this weekend, the image of the Sacred Heart — which shows Our Lord’s heart burning with love for us, and yet also wounded (encircled by the crown of thorns) by us, by our sins. The famous image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, popularized in the 17th c. by the French nun, the saintly visionary Margaret Mary Alacoque, draws us in to the joy of divine love for humanity. The infinite love of God for us is contained within that human heart of Jesus — the Son of God made man for our sake.

I have also placed the image there for the benefit of the First-Holy-Communion children this weekend (...). Because it is always important to have that reminder that the Holy Eucharist — Holy Communion — is about the real

and living presence of Jesus Christ, coming into our souls. To have a picture before us of the one we love — the one we will welcome lovingly into our heart — is a beautiful and human thing to do. As we display the image of Jesus’s Sacred Heart — whether here in church, or whether at home — we are reminded of the one we love above all, and we give thanks for His infinite love.

Our knowing that Jesus is truly present in the Holy Eucharist — His body and blood given to us ever since the Last Supper under the appearances of bread and wine — determines our action, our approach, to Holy Communion. These are things that each of us should put into practice, whether we received our First Holy Communion 70yrs ago, or are about to do so today! For example ...

- To arrive in good time for Mass, so we can be recollected and prayerful; not rushing in late, or missing most of the Scripture readings. It gives us a chance to read the readings before Mass, too, so as to be ready to receive more from them as we hear them read aloud.
- To practice reverently the action of genuflecting before

the Blessed Sacrament. This we should do as we enter and leave Church, and whenever we cross in front of the Tabernacle. In this way we are acknowledging the fact that Jesus is here present: His living divine person is here in the Holy Eucharist kept reserved here for us at all times in the Tabernacle. When we genuflect we are doing so to Jesus: not to the altar, or ‘the front of church,’ or anything else, but to Jesus Christ Himself. We go down on one knee to say that He is our Lord.

- To acknowledge that there might be times when we are conscious of having grave sin on our souls, and that we should abstain from receiving Holy Communion until such time as we have been to Confession.
- To be very reverent in the way we receive Our Lord in Holy Communion, both as we process forward (praying and preparing to receive Him) and then as we actually receive Communion, whether on the tongue or in the hand, to do so with the utmost respect and reverence for the sanctity of the Sacrament of Jesus’s body & blood. Then, when we return to our places, to use that time for

silent prayer to Jesus whom we have received. This is the most sacred moment of the week, having just welcomed God the Son into our souls: we should use this precious time well, to speak to the Lord openly and lovingly, for ourselves and for those in need of prayer.

- To make time to come in to church at other times in the week: to pop in whenever possible to pray before Jesus in the Tabernacle. Better still, to come at the times when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for Adoration — as it will be for 40 Hrs over 3 days in 2 weekends’ time. Time spent in prayer in the very presence of Jesus, is a gift of incomparable love to God. It is a sacrifice of time lovingly given to God; and He will reward you abundantly for this act of prayer and reverence to Him.

In these ways, amongst others, we demonstrate our Catholic faith in the Real Presence of Jesus. Let’s take this month to renew our devotion, our prayerfulness, and our deepest love for Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist; and so set our children, and also visitors to our parish, the best possible example of Catholic love in divine worship.