

Starting (so that we can end) with God

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

When I sat down to write this short article for the bulletin this weekend I was kind of lost. It is one of the first inserts that I will do for the summer during my time here at your parish, and my goal was to get a rhythm set up for the following weeks, making future articles easier. That however proved to be fruitless.

I decided that I ought to approach writing for the bulletin just as I would writing a paper for any one of my classes. I would look at the primary sources (this Sunday's readings) and maybe grab a secondary source (e.g. a Biblical commentary), then commence writing. So, I looked at the blank page on my laptop and started to write. About two hours later, I started to struggle with the point which I (thought) was driving at, and then I started to see even more errors. Eventually, I realized my problem; *I* was doing the writing and not God. Instead of starting my task by bringing it to the Lord in prayer, I thought I could do this on my own. No task should ever begin outside of God.

Jesus tells us in the Gospel this Sunday that "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (Jn 6:53). The body and blood that we receive at Mass is indeed the way to the eternal life. This union is what draws us closer to that ultimate union with our Lord in Heaven. From these words of Jesus we recognize that we are incapable of achieving salvation on our own. Therefore, it makes sense that we ought to draw near to our Lord in the Eucharist. Moreover, everything that we do and say ought to draw us closer to the Lord. If our end goal is union with the Father, then we must start with the Son. "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.'" (Jn 14:6).

How does this play out in our everyday life? Consider the order of the Mass as a guide. We start with making the sign of Cross, the weapon which Jesus used to win our salvation. We then go into the Penitential Act, where we recognize our sinfulness and ask for God's mercy. Then there is the Liturgy of the Word, where we listen to the Word of God which provides instruction on how we are to live our lives, and teaches us the truths about our loving God. Finally, we go into the Liturgy of the Eucharist, where we receive "the Bread of life and the Chalice of salvation" (from the Eucharistic Prayer II). Now, consider this as a model for application to our own lives. First, we must recognize our insufficiency to achieve our own salvation and the wonderful mercy of God. We then turn to the living word of God in the Bible, and see what a relationship with the Lord looks like. Finally, we receive the Eucharist, the source of our faith, and the true path to salvation.

Every aspect of our lives (no matter how mundane) has meaning for our relationship with the Lord, and therefore has effect on our relationship with Him and our salvation which is through Him. Just as I could not propose to write anything for God on my own, or attain my own salvation, so to everything in our lives should always begin by with God. For it is by Him alone that it shall be brought to a fruitful end.

Seminarian Roarke (Rory) Traynor