

+ J. M. J.

One of the stories that made news late in the week was that one of the Oakland A's prospects announced he was quitting baseball to enter the seminary to study to become a priest. It is quite interesting to read some of the comments on the internet. Some people think this is utter foolishness. Others say it would be better for him to make a lot of money and help countless people as a role model. Then there are those who say if it makes him happy then good for him.

In reading these commentaries we get a sense there is a lost notion that Christians are to give their entire lives to Christ in order to be Christian. St. Paul gives us the analogy of us being part of the body of Christ. An eye is meant to see. An ear is meant to hear. A nose is meant to smell. We need all of these organs for the body to function properly, and each organ is to perform its function one hundred percent of the time lest our bodies will be impaired in some way. This analogy gets extended to the body of Christ. Each of us is to function in our role as a member of the Body of Christ and we are to do it to the best of our abilities all the time or else the Body of Christ is not operating as Christ intends. So, someone called to the priesthood should be a good priest. Someone called to play baseball should be a Christian baseball player. Someone called to be a doctor should be a Christian doctor. Someone called to be a teacher should be a Christian teacher.

To understand how to live in the world as a member of the Body of Christ we have to take our lead from Christ, our head. When Christ announced that he was the fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah, to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to let the oppressed go free he certainly did this. This gladness, this liberty, this freedom is what will be experienced in fullness in heaven when we are free from sin and its effects of suffering and death. What heaven is experiencing in full the love of God. Jesus brought that love into this world so that when we are joined to Christ through the sacraments and are in a relationship with him we even now experience heaven. Christ continues to offer

that gladness, that liberty, that freedom, to everyone in the world and he does so through his body, which is us.

Part of the vision of the Second Vatican Council was that the laity not only priests and religious were to contribute to building up the holiness of the Church. Concretely that means in their daily occupations the members of the body of Christ are to assist one another in growing closer to Jesus, in becoming holier. Through their expertise in labor, technical skills, and civic culture, Christians are to begin building that kingdom of God right here on earth. The faithful are supposed to come to Church on Sunday, receive Christ in the Eucharist, and be Christ on Monday morning at the office in all actions and deeds and through the morals they adhere to.

God calls out to us and asks us to be joined of the Body of Christ in a unique way and to be today that living message of freedom that Jesus gives. At Our Lady of Sorrows we have embarked on a year of gracious living and in particular we are examining what it means to respond to the gifts that God has given us. In these months we consider the first step in that response which is to pray. This morning then let us consider our gifts and our vocation and turn to God in prayer in praise and thanksgiving. As we continue to pray about our role in the Body of Christ then listen in that prayer and allow God to change us so are entire lives may be an offering and thereby we will be that member functioning in the Body as God wills.

May God bless you.

Comment [DC1]: Cultivate relationship with Christ through prayer