

“SACRAMENTAL DIALYSIS”

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

For May 9, 2021 – St. Patrick Catholic Church

Yesterday morning, I attended a Memorial Mass at Calvary Cemetery for a priest who died last March, Fr. David Knight.

As I sat there with Mass unfolding and contemplating his life, I realized that tomorrow was Mother’s Day. I looked at the liturgy aid, and noticed that his middle name was Buell, which happened to be his Mom’s maiden name, so I couldn’t help but wonder what influence his Mom had on the path toward his vocation.

Sisters and brothers,
I suspect Fr. Knight’s Mom had much to do with the beginnings of his vocation. I know my dear Mother, who has been with the Lord for 42 years now had a great influence on my life, and I suspect yours did too, whether she is living or deceased. Today we honor all our Mothers.

“I am the vine; you are the branches.”

No, those particular words are not in
This week's Gospel from John.

Last week, Fr. Val gave us a wonderful example
of that Ginko tree just outside his window
illustrating Christ, the vine, and all of us,
joined as branches on the vine.

This week's Gospel is a continuation
of the "vine and branches" section of
the farewell words given by
Jesus to his disciples
before his arrest and crucifixion.

This fifteenth chapter of John is devoted to
Jesus preparing the disciples for the chaos and violence
That lie in days ahead.

Even though He's warning them of the hate
that will follow,
in the last line of today's Gospel
He leaves them with these comforting words:

***"I am giving you these commands so that you may love one
another."***

Today, let's look at the "vine and branches"
in a completely different way.

Back in the time of Christ,
working in a vineyard and pruning vines

was as common as filling a car with gas and driving off down the road.

Now, here in the Mid-South, it's difficult to produce grapes or wine.

So, to get the full impact of today's gospel, let's think in terms of IV tubes in a hospital instead of branches on a vine.

Let's think about blood transfusions, oxygen tanks, maybe kidney dialysis. Let's think about anything that brings home the message that, without our being connected to Christ...we die.

Let's talk about someone in our own parish. Most of you know Deacon Eugene. He and his wife Anna are faithful, long time members of this parish. Deacon Eugene and I were ordained together. I have asked his permission to share this with you.

Deacon Eugene goes for dialysis three days a week. He has been on dialysis for about five years now.

Deacon Eugene's body needs on-going dialysis. But his spirit also requires a regular infusion of grace that we call Eucharist, just like all of us. So, each week, when the nurses at that dialysis center

disconnect those IV tubes,
he returns home to regain his physical strength.

It is a physical struggle to regain his strength
and continue to put one foot in front of the other
in order to continue to serve God's people as a
Deacon of the church to which he committed
Some twenty-one years ago.

Yet, he knows that it is Christ
and his connection to Christ,
that keeps his spirit strong and his hope alive...
his hope in a life beyond this life,
a life without end.

Now, is this just another way of talking about
having a good attitude and a positive outlook?

Not for Deacon Eugene, who knows,
in a way that most of us have not yet experienced,
that Christ is the medicine, we are the vein.

Have you ever thought of the Eucharist as *sacramental dialysis*?

When the Living Bread dissolves on your tongue
you absorb the living Christ.
And one day, God willing
when you drink of the Chalice
you receive a transfusion of life-giving Blood.

During this Mass and every Mass,

Christ comes to dwell with us...and within us.

We are part of Him and He is part of us.

We are His Body. He is our Blood.

Sacramental Dialysis

He is the medicine; we are the vein.

- Sacramental Dialysis concept from Fr. Jim Schmitmeyer, a priest of the Diocese of Amarillo