

# Letter From The Pastor: Msgr. William L. Young, III



Dear Parishioners:

Two beautiful images arise in today's readings, the Lord's holy mountain and the marriage banquet. Each of these venues has a certain quality that tends to raise one's spirit beyond itself and into thoughts about others both divine and human.

The holy mountain hosts the rich banquet – the finest meats and wines that bring fullness and contentment. We all, most likely, have had one of those meals that fills us and puts us to sleep. I almost always experience this after the big turkey dinner at Thanksgiving. But alas, no matter how good and delicious it was, I grow hungry again.

On the Lord's holy mountain that feeling of tranquility will be eternal. There will be no hunger, thirst, unfulfilled dreams etc. All will be at peace and fear will no longer approach you or send you into doubt and frustration.

We also are treated to the scene of a wedding banquet. In the time of Jesus, a wedding could last two or three days [think of how much this would cost today!]. There was a great sense of community and family. Our faith believes that every gift of grace is NEVER meant for solely personal use. Of course, every gift has a personal side, but never just for the person.

A wedding does not simply belong to a man or woman any more than a man's ordination is his own. A baptism, first communion, in fact all the sacraments belong to the entire Church. It is "our" wedding, "our" ordination etc.

Our Catechism teaches us that Christ instituted the sacraments of the new law. There are seven: Baptism, Confirmation (or Chrismation), the Eucharist, Penance, the Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony. The seven sacraments touch all stages and all the important moments of Christian life: they give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian's life of faith. There is thus a certain resemblance between the stages of natural life and the stages of the spiritual life.

Following this analogy, the first chapter will expound the three sacraments of Christian initiation; the second, the sacraments of healing; and the third, the sacraments at the service of communion and the mission of the faithful. This order, while not the only one possible, does allow one to see that the sacraments form an organic whole in which each particular sacrament has its own vital place. In this organic whole, the Eucharist occupies a unique place as the "Sacrament of sacraments": "all the other sacraments are ordered to it as to their end" (1210-11, emphasis mine).

The sacraments at the service of communion are Matrimony and Holy Orders. Further into the Catechism we learn, "Two other sacraments, Holy Orders and Matrimony, are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the People of God (1534)."

In common parlance we use the personal pronouns about our wedding, ordination or other sacrament, but there is a much broader meaning to those celebrations. It is never just about me or us because we are part of one another. But how can a confession, so private, be a sacrament for all? Confession touches the entire Church because sins are forgiven and greater holiness comes to the Church through penance and ardent efforts to grow in grace.

This aspect of the sacraments broadens our ability to bond with the larger Church which is important because we belong not just to a parish, but to a worldwide Church and everyone in heaven. For us it is never just me and Jesus, but we and Jesus. "At all times and in every race, anyone who fears God and does what is right has been acceptable to him. He has, however, willed to make men holy and save them, **not as individuals without any bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him** in holiness" [CCC 781 — quotes Lumen Gentium 9; cf. Acts 10:35; 1 Cor 11:25 emphasis added].

Let us be one in all our prayers and desires for the love of Love that the world will know we are His disciples.

Pace – bene,  
*Msgr. Bill*