



Saint John Bosco: Purity of Heart

Introductory Prayer: Lord Jesus, we believe in you with all our heart. We trust in your infinite goodness and mercy. Thank you for so patiently guiding us along the pathway to everlasting life. We love you and offer you all that we have and all that we do, for your glory and the salvation of souls. Through the intercession of Saint John Bosco, may we increase in faith, hope, and love.

Feast Day: Jan. 31 **Father James Kelleher, SOLT video #1:** (www.youtube.com/watch?v=7U9lqlsTXR4)

John 6:41-51 The Bread of Eternal Life

The Jews murmured about Jesus because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven,” and they said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” Jesus answered and said to them, “Stop murmuring among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day. It is written in the prophets: They shall all be taught by God. Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”

Father James Kelleher, SOLT video #2 (www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTyHpPxgyI4)

Discussion questions (credit to Father Daniel Ray, LC for reflections):

1. The Pure of Heart Shall See God: Those who murmured against Moses in the desert are like those that murmured against Jesus in the Gospel, which are like those that murmur against the Church in our present time. To believe Christ and the Church He founded requires a certain disposition of the heart – namely, a heart that is pure and humble. A heart that is pure is single-minded and whole-hearted in its service to God. An impure heart is double-minded and half-hearted – split between the world and God like that of an idolater (James 4:4). A heart that is humble is less sure of itself and more dependent on listening to what God is saying and His Church is teaching.

- a) How can we cultivate purity of heart in our homes?
- b) It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that we can have it both ways: a heart divided between the world and God. But a Christian is called to be *in* the world but not *of* the world. What are the struggles to remain single-minded in our service to God?

2. Bread from Heaven: Not only is the Eucharist an aqueduct of divine life, the Eucharist is Jesus Christ himself. “The mode of Christ’s presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend” (CCC 1374). We encounter the God of unconditional love in receiving communion and in praying in front of the tabernacle. In St. John Bosco’s dream the column of the Eucharist had a sign on it which read “Salvation of Believers.” Christ is present body, blood, soul, and divinity – believe it!

- a) With the availability of so many parishes that offer daily Mass and hours of adoration, why do so few of us attend? Do we take the gift of the Eucharist for granted?
- b) Many Christians (even some Catholics) no longer believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. What could be the cause of this alarming loss of faith in something so basic to Christianity?

3. Eternal Life: In *Jesus of Nazareth* Pope Benedict XVI emphasizes that eternal life is not something that awaits us after death, but is a reality that begins in this world: “‘Eternal life’ is life itself, real life, which can also be lived in the present age and is no longer challenged by physical death. This is the point: to seize ‘life’ here and now, real life that can no longer be destroyed by anything or anyone.” Through faith in the Eucharist, we enter into this new life that is different

from a life that is bound up in the world and seeks only pleasure and comfort within our material existence. Ultimately, human life – even the richest, the most successful, and most powerful – becomes a dull monotony unless there is hope in something new and greater than this existence down below.

- a) Union with God is our ultimate goal – of which, the Eucharist is a foretaste. As Saint John Bosco said: “There are two things the devil is deadly afraid of: fervent Communion and frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament.” What can we do to receive Christ with more fervor?
- b) How do we live the joy of heaven here on earth?

Men’s / Women’s parish team resolution for the month (choose one or suggest your own):

- Commit to weekly Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration.
- Commit to going to Confession at least once this month.
- Make a spiritual communion with the Lord daily.

Closing Prayer: One decade of Scripture Rosary: the third Sorrowful Mystery, the Crowning with Thorns.

Verses to be recited before each Hail Mary:

1. Now the soldiers led Him away into the courtyard, and they stripped Him and put on Him a purple cloak. (Mark 15:16; Matt. 27:28)
2. And plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on His head, and a reed into His right hand. (Matt. 27:29)
3. And bending the knee before Him they mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” (Matt. 27:29)
4. And they spat on Him, and took the reed and kept striking Him on the head. (Matt. 27:50)
5. Pilate again went outside and said, “I bring Him out to you, that you may know that I find no guilt in Him.” (John 19:4)
6. Jesus therefore came forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. (John 19:5)
7. And Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” But they cried out, “Away with Him! Crucify Him!” (John 19:5, 15)
8. “Why, what evil has He done?” But they kept crying out the more, “Crucify Him!” (Mark 15:14)
9. “Shall I crucify your king?” And the chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” (John 19:15)
10. Then he handed Him over to them to be crucified. And so they took Jesus and led Him away. (John 19:16)

(Taken from www.ourcatholicprayers.com)

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