

A young boy was walking home through the park after attending Mass and PSR. Somehow he could not stop thinking about the lesson for that day on Jesus' parable of the last judgment – and whatever you do to the least of your brothers and sisters – you do for him. Where was he supposed to find Jesus today – so he could do something for him?

As he continued through the park, he noticed an old woman sitting on a bench. She looked lonely and hungry. So he sat down next to her, took a candy bar he had been saving out of his pocket – broke off a piece and offered it to her.

She accepted it with a smile. The boy liked that – so he broke off another piece and gave it to her – and again, the old woman smiled. Finally, the candy bar was all eaten – so he got up to leave.

When he arrived home, his mother saw a big smile on his face and asked, “what made you so happy today?” The boy said, “I shared my candy bar with Jesus today – and she is much older than I expected.”

Likewise, the old woman returned to her small apartment where she lived with her sister with a big smile on her face --- and so her sister asked: “What made you so happy today?” She said, “Why I was eating a chocolate bar with Jesus in the park. And, you know, he looks a lot younger than I expected.”

We sometimes find Jesus in the most unexpected places --- but sometimes in the places we expect to find him – we miss him, because we take his presence for granted.

So – here – in this place – at this time – among these people – Sunday after Sunday – when we come together to rest in the Lord --- where are we supposed to find Jesus?

The first document that was produced by the Second Vatican Council, was the document on the liturgy – which came out on December 4th, 1963 --- 51 years ago. It passed, by the way, with a vote of 2,147 Bishops for the document --- and 4, against – just to show the overwhelming majority by which it was passed.

This document approved such things as celebrating the Mass in English, called the Church: “the people of God”, and proclaimed Baptism -- NOT ordination ----as the foundational sacrament for Ministry in the Church.

The document on the Sacred Liturgy tells us there are four places where we should look for and hopefully find Jesus --- when we gather together:

One is pretty obvious: Jesus is found in the bread and wine which becomes his Body and Blood. The Eucharist is the “Bread of Life” of which Jesus talks about in today's Gospel. This bread of life nourishes us, strengthens us, and gives us the energy we need to be more like Christ. For we become what we eat – so Sunday by Sunday, little by little, over a lifetime – we should be becoming more like Christ – by our reception of the Eucharist.

Also, somewhat obvious: is that Jesus is found in the proclaimed Word of God. We believe that God's mercy, and forgiveness, and love, and compassion are all made known to us through the words of Scripture. That in reading the Scriptures both in public and in private – we come to know the mind and heart of God – and we are comforted by it – because we come to know that no matter what – God loves us --- but also challenged by it -- to put what we learn here – into practice when we go back out there.

There is a saying in our day when about computers – trash in – trash out. The same is true of us – we want to take in the good news of the Gospel – so that mercy, kindness, and goodness can flow out from us.

The 3rd place the document on the liturgy tells us we are to seek and find Christ during the Mass – is in the presiding minister ---- that is me. And acknowledging the fact that I am still in process – I know, at times, my words and actions can be far from being Christ-like --- and so it might be hard, at times, for some of you to find Christ in me ----- just know that the opposite is equally true – at times I find it hard to find Christ in some of you. . .

Because that is the 4th place that Christ is present when we gather for the Eucharist --- “in the whole community, gathered to worship and pray.”

So if we look to our right – and look to our left – we are looking at Jesus. Even in her? We might ask – yes even in her. And the guy behind us, and the squirmy kid in front of us. Have you ever heard the saying: friends, you choose. But family you’re stuck with? Well, we are family here – and so we are stuck with each other.

And we need to remember that -- especially in those times we find it difficult to find Christ in one another – the times we absolutely drive each other up the wall because of our stubbornness, or our inability to change or to accept diversity --- we just don’t pick up and move on abandoning one another –

- no, I think the call we receive as the Body of Christ is that no matter what – we don’t give up on each other --- we’re going to stay (no matter how hard it gets at times) and continue looking for that presence of Christ in one another --- because he is there --- he may be hidden under layers of pain and hurt—which has caused bitterness and inflexibility --- but Christ is there.

And if we practice that ability to seek and find Christ here in this place ----- it makes it much easier, and much more likely to happen --- that when we leave this place of like-minded people behind – and go back out -- into the very diverse world we have to live in --- that we are going to find Christ in places we don’t expect – and in a few places we do expect. . .

So let’s do our best – Sunday after Sunday to seek and find Christ – here:

In his body and blood.

In the word of God which is proclaimed.

In the Church’s minister – whoever he might be.

And in one another.

Christ is here among us – and one day he will come in glory and in his kingdom there will be no more suffering, no more tears, no more sadness.

And to that – we should say: AMEN!