

Just a word to our seniors as they prepare for graduation. St. John Henry Newman once wrote: “I am created to do or be something for which no one else is created: I have a place in God’s counsels, in God’s world, which no one else has. Whether I be rich or poor, despised or esteemed by man, God knows me and calls me by name.”

These words of St. John Newman remind all of you that as you reach moment of achievement in your life, you are called to realize that God has a plan for your life. The key to happiness is to allow God to show you his plan and the key to happiness is to live according to all that God has revealed to us through Jesus His Son and His Church. My prayers for each of you is that you be a faithful Catholic and always put God first in your life.

For most of Jesus' public life, people would crowd around Him. People were attracted to Jesus. He was a popular guy. If he was teaching in the synagogue, the crowds would come. If he was walking down the street people would gather around him. Even if he was having a meal in someone's home, lots of folks would be there. But there were two times when people fled from Jesus. The obvious one is after his arrest and crucifixion. Where were all the crowds then? Where are all those people that followed him for three years? Where are all those people who had witnessed his miracles? Where were all the people he had cured and fed? Nowhere to be found.

There's another time that people walked away from Jesus. And that was when he spoke about the Eucharist. He said words like "I am the bread of life.. Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you." Straight after this, we read in John's Gospel chapter 6, when many of his disciples heard it, they said, "this is a difficult teaching; who can accept it?" And a few lines later we read, after this, that many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. And we also note that Jesus did not say, "Oh come back, I was only kidding.

Let's talk about it, maybe I was wrong. Perhaps we can change this teaching. Maybe we can work something out. We need to make everybody happy.” No. Jesus turned to his disciples after this response and he said, “do you also wish to leave me?”

Now the Eucharist is a hard teaching. To believe that bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus requires childlike faith. We simply believe because Jesus is God and can do anything. How is our response to this teaching? Will we walk away from Jesus or remain by his side? Let's face it. The Eucharist is at the core of our faith. And today's feast day is all about the Eucharist.

As I say this I am aware of another Eucharistic miracle that recently took place in Poland in 2013 and has been approved as a true Eucharistic miracle. In this case a study done on the host which was transformed into visible human flesh was found to be part of the heart muscle. How amazing is that. The heart of Jesus nourishing our hearts and souls.

Now there are a lot of good things about being Catholic. But at the top of the list is the Holy Eucharist. Many people have never really stopped and thought about it but the Eucharist is amazing. I have faced the question “would I ever leave the Catholic Church?” I have thought about that question and the Lord knows there are many things that could prompt a person to get upset about members in the Catholic Church, including sexual scandals in recent years. But I keep coming back to the same conclusion. I could never leave the Catholic Church. The main reason is because I believe Jesus truly founded the Catholic Church and He is truly present body blood soul and divinity in the Eucharist. No other Church has that. No other Church has a valid priesthood and Eucharist. The Catholic Church does.

For sure, you know, there's lots of other churches. Some other churches might have better music. But in the whole scheme of things music is trivial compared to the Eucharist. And other churches might have more engaging preachers. But these too are trivial compared to the Eucharist. When we go to mass on Sunday the danger is in thinking that the music and the homily are the most important thing. But that's not true. I can give an uninspiring

sermon on some Sunday but you can still receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

We should not take the trivial and make it the most important. That is how the world works. The world takes what doesn't matter in the eternal scheme of things and considers it most important. And the world takes the things that are most important in the eternal scheme of things and treats them as trivial. We need to get clear about what matters most, about what's really important and life will be a lot simpler and a lot more joyful for us.

At mass on Sunday, the homily could be in a language I don't even understand. As Matthew Kelly once wrote, "The music could be a complete train wreck. There could be kids running up and down the aisles screaming at the top of their lungs, throwing their crayons and eating their snacks or or throwing their snacks and eating their crayons and that's OK. Because the moment when I receive the Eucharist is a pivotal moment in my week. It's a moment of transformation, The moment I get to receive who and what I wish to become. I could never leave that. It doesn't matter how good the music or the preaching is somewhere else, I could

never leave the Eucharist. I would never leave Jesus. And I pray that you wouldn't either."

When I reflect on the gift of faith that I have been given, I am lead to the conclusion that once we believe in the Eucharist, we're given the grace to look beyond the bad homily, and the grace to look beyond a good homily. We are given the grace to look beyond music that is uninspiring. And the grace to look beyond music that elevates and inspires our hearts minds and souls. Because beyond all of these things, Way beyond all of these things, that's where we find Jesus in the Eucharist. This sets the Catholic Church apart. Jesus truly present in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is uniquely Catholic.

Let me ask you a question, if you had to spend the rest of your life on a deserted island, and you could only take five people with you, Who would you take? Would you include a priest? No priest, no Mass. No Mass, no Eucharist. I can't live without the Eucharist and more important, I don't want to. And once you come to understand the power of the Eucharist, you won't want to live without it either. I was born Catholic by the grace of God, and I

will die Catholic by the grace of God. And there are lots of reasons for that, but none more compelling than the Eucharist.