

The Gospel of John



Notes From the Podium

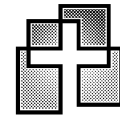
These notes are intended to augment your own reading and study of the lesson. Please use as an aid to help you incorporate the main message of the lesson into your lecture.

I. First Approach: the moment of the text.

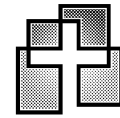
- a. Later that evening behind closed doors, Our Lord came and stood among the disciples.
 - i. The first thing He says is “Peace be with you.” V19
 - ii. He shows them His hands and side and the disciples respond with gladness.
 - iii. Repeating “peace be with you,” He adds, “receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” V23
- b. Later, they communicate their encounter with the Resurrected Lord to Thomas who was absent.
 - i. Thomas claims he will not believe unless he sees His hands and side and can examine them with his hands. V25
- c. Eight days later, to the disciples (now complete with Thomas) Our Lord returns behind closed doors.
 - i. He begins again, “Peace be with you.”
 - ii. He invites Thomas to examine His wounds.
 1. Thomas immediately replies, “My Lord and God!” V28
 2. Jesus replies, “...Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” V29
- d. John makes a summary note.
 - i. He states that other signs not included in his account were witnessed by the disciples – but his are carefully chosen for the purpose that “you”/the reader “may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you have life in His name.” V31

II. Second Approach – Pastoral Points

- a. Happiness vs. Peace
 - i. The Christian problem with the American Dream
 1. Parents often say to their children, “I just want you to be happy.”
 - a. As common children of our nation’s Founding Fathers we hear them declaring rights for us such as, “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”
 - b. However, they understood that the pursuit/quest of man for happiness was an ETERNAL one.
 2. The problem with the “pursuit of happiness” as it is understood today (the American Dream) is that it is trying to locate permanent happiness in *this* life.



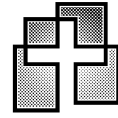
- a. An eternal, earthly happiness is not possible.
 - i. Rather, we experience glimpses of happiness in this life – marriage, love, friendship, birth of a child, achievement, enlightenment, etc...
 - ii. These glimpses are just foretastes of the happiness that awaits God’s faithful in Heaven.
 - iii. These moments of happiness are like a trail of crumbs that both help lead the way to everlasting happiness and at the same time provides us with just enough sustenance to keep us persevering.
- b. This modern “pursuit of happiness” is a lie.
 - i. Permanent and lasting happiness is not here but in the next life – Heaven.
- ii. What then does Our Lord promise us in this life?
 - 1. In this short passage we hear Our Lord say three times as His first words to the Church, “Peace be with you.” Vv 20:19; 21; & 26.
 - 2. Peace is what He promises us in this life – His peace.
 - a. His peace is not the absence of conflict (the martyrs can testify to this).
 - b. His peace is an *eternal* peace – a transcendent, untouchable calm of the soul that sees one through the challenges of this life – through the highs and lows.
 - c. His peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. The fruits of the Holy Spirit: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity.
CCC 1832
- b. Docility to the Church
 - i. Dr. Hahn makes the point that St. Thomas’ transgression is that he does not accept the word/authority of the Church. He regards account of the Resurrected Christ as merely the human, fallible testimony of his fellow disciples.
 - 1. Recall that the Lord breathes upon them and gives them His authority.
 - 2. Thomas doesn’t understand. It is not the testimony of men that he is rejecting when he rejects their account, it is the testimony of the Church.
 - 3. Docility to the voice of Christ in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is necessary for one to receive the fullness of the Christian faith.



Notes From the Podium (cont.)

Catholic Scripture Study

- ii. In fact, docility to the faith of the Church regularly *precedes* our understanding of it.
 - 1. This applies to cradle-Catholics and non-Catholics alike.
 - a. First Example – (a non-Catholic) Dr. Scott Hahn.
 - i. Prior to his conversion to Catholicism he sought to understand everything he could about the Christian faith and ninety-nine percent of the time his well-examined understanding of the faith matched that of the Church.
 - ii. However, there was one area that he could not fully grasp – The Blessed Virgin Mary.
 - 1. He recounts how he simply trusted that the Church must be right as it had been proven to him over and over again that the faith of the Catholic Church was always right.
 - 2. Having personally learned of the authority of the Church he chose to be docile to Her on this matter – he trusted in Her authority.
 - iii. Understanding could only take Dr. Hahn so far – at some point he had to submit and then...understanding followed.
 - b. Second Example – (a Cradle-Catholic) Fr. Winslow.
 - i. Allow me to recall the first time I ever recall learning about the true presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist...
 - 1. I was as dumb as a stump regarding the faith of the Church.
 - a. People can mock the old way of memorizing, but at least they learned something.
 - b. I knew little to nothing.
 - ii. I was asked how I could be a Chemist and still remain Catholic.
 - 1. Needless to say, I did not understand the question.
 - 2. This Lutheran began to tell me what I believed as a Catholic...
 - a. He never expected to hear that response out of me.
 - b. He was confronted with something unusual to him – a docility that is part and parcel to Divine and Catholic Faith.
 - iii. My docility (religious assent) to the faith of the Church preceded my understanding of it.



Notes From the Podium (cont.)

Catholic Scripture Study

- c. Many of you may have already experienced this right here in this Scripture study.
 - i. How many of you have learned something that you simply, until now, accepted because it was the voice of the Church but through this course have come to some deeper understanding.
 - 1. Eg. The true presence of Christ in the Eucharist; the singular role of the Blessed Virgin Mary; the nature of the Mass; the divine construction of the Church; etc...
 - ii. Without your docility to the voice of the Church (which comes from Divine and Catholic Faith) you would have never come to understand as you do now.

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