

Brothers and sisters,

Happy Lord's Day! Before we get "back to the basics", I thought I would share with you a little bit about my spiritual history as a way to give a bit of context for my life. The whole story could take awhile, so I'll just give the bare bones. By all means, feel free to ask questions whenever you see me.

When I was growing up in Crookston, I rarely attended Sunday Mass. We were a pretty classic example of what I call Holiday Catholics - pretty much just attending Mass on Christmas, Easter, and for special family functions. I attended faith formation classes, but didn't bother to pay attention to them. When I was preparing for Confirmation in 10th/11th grade, everything changed for me: I attended a retreat for a week during the summer and had a big conversion. I went to Confession for the first time since my first Confession, I started going to Mass every Sunday and sometimes even during the week, I started praying daily, and I started spending time with friends who were helpful for my spiritual growth. By no means did I become a saint overnight (I'm still far from that), but I made a conscious decision to follow Jesus and be an active member of his Church.

There was so much that I didn't know, so much that I was never taught. I quickly found out that the Bible is something that can actually come alive, that each Mass is such an incredible moment, that Jesus is real and to believe in him and follow his ways is a reasonable thing to do. Wanting to act with integrity, as my parents taught me as a child, I decided I would act upon the things I learned about our Catholic-Christian Faith. Eventually I started helping lead these types of retreats. After pursuing my dreams of becoming a college football coach for a couple of years, a series of events led me to switch gears and go to seminary. After an initial struggle, some difficult moments of setting aside desires for marriage, some growth in discipline and prayer, growth in my love for Mass, and much more, I was ordained in May 2015. Two of the things I love most about being a priest is teaching and preaching, sharing the Faith to those who have either known it for years or have never really been given a clear explanation of things, or anyone in between. I hope my time here can provide for all of us, myself included, many opportunities to come to know God better and, thus, love him more completely with our hearts, minds, souls, and strength. Be assured of my prayers for you as we strive to grow together.

On an unrelated note, I'll be away for a few days this week - Tuesday after Mass until Saturday night - spending time with some family friends at a lake place (an annual thing where they invite their priest friend and so get daily Mass right there in the cabin) and then a day with my family. I'll look forward to seeing you all on Sunday again.

May the Lord give you his peace!
Fr. Bryan