

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Cycle B-2024

In his hit song “All of Me,” John Legend sings, “Cause all of me, loves all of you.” A verse later he goes onto say, “Give your all to me, I’ll give my all to you. You’re my end and my beginning, even when I lose, I’m winning. Cause I give you all of me. And you give me all of you.” These words are part of a beautiful love song. Do you realize that these same relational dynamics are true in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Throughout history, Jesus has proclaimed and shown us in some rather remarkable ways that “All of me loves all of you” and “I give you all of me.” Some of the more notable expressions include being born for all humanity so that we can discover God’s love and learn how to love God in return, dying for all humanity so that we can experience forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God, and rising for all humanity that we can enjoy an everlasting relationship with God. Through our relationship with the church, Jesus Christ also proclaims and shows us “All of me loves all of you” and “I give you all of me” through the gift of: His

Holy Spirit through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation; His mercy and salvation through the sacrament of Reconciliation; the fullness of His human and divine Self through the sacrament of the Eucharist; His comforting, strengthening, and healing love through the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick; and how He loves and serves us and His people through the sacraments of Matrimony and Holy Orders.

On a daily basis, Jesus Christ proclaims and shows us “All of me loves all of you” and “And I give you all of me” through all the ways He offers us His love and grace inside and outside of prayer; guides and inspires us through the Holy Spirit; protects us from personal and spiritual danger, and provides for the needs of body, mind, heart, and soul.

In today’s Gospel Jesus proclaims to His twelve disciples and to us: “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up His cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it.” Using imagery from the song, that is Jesus’s way of saying to us “Give your all to me.” He in turn promises us, “I’ll give my all to you.” The

deepest desire of Jesus's heart is to continually give us all of Himself to the degree we are willing to receive Him. Do you realize that our relationship with Jesus Christ is all about mutual love and mutual sacrifice? The depth of our love for Jesus is expressed through the depth of our sacrifice for Him. They are always intertwined. If they are not, something authentic and foundational is missing from the relationship.

So far, I have reflected on various ways Jesus has and continues to sacrifice for us out of love. Now, I want to ponder on how we can do the same. There are a variety of ways we can do this. They include the sacrifice of our will, the sacrifice of our service, and the sacrifice of esteem from others for the sake of Jesus and the truth. There are two other forms of sacrifice that I would like to focus on in my homily. That is because they are the relational springboard from which we are inspired and strengthened to embrace these other forms of sacrifice.

First, we can offer Jesus the sacrifice of our time. Time is one of the greatest gifts that He bestows on us. How do we use our time for Him? Ideally, spending time with Jesus in prayer becomes the highest personal and relational priority of our day. We schedule and make

time with Him instead of just fitting Him in if we happen to have time or we happen to be in the mood. We pray whether we feel like it or not. We find a way to pray whether it is convenient or not. He becomes the center of our day instead of an afterthought or one option among many.

Our time with Jesus is not limited just to scheduled or routine times. We also talk to him in the silence and intimacy of our minds and hearts as we engage in the activities and interactions of our day. Even though it is humanly impossible to spend every waking moment in literal, personal prayer, we come to view prayer as the most important and best use of our time. We also live out our daily responsibilities and interactions with a spiritual awareness we are doing this as an expression of our love for Jesus and that He is with us. In this way, our whole life can become a sacrifice of our time for Christ.

Second, we can offer Jesus Christ the sacrifice of our heart. Our heart is the deepest place within us. It is that place where we are in touch with our innermost thoughts and feelings, about Jesus Christ, other people, ourselves, and life itself. We are often more comfortable living on the surface of our daily

existence. We are hesitant or resistant to look within for a variety of reasons. There is a tendency to put a “Do Not Disturb” sign on our hearts, which is the most intimate part of who we are. This can be true even in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

I want to drop a nuclear size truth bomb on you right now. I hope it explodes within your hearts in a manner that forever alters the landscape of your interactions with Jesus. The truth bomb is this. Jesus Christ can read our minds and hearts. He knows our innermost thoughts and feelings. There is zero percent chance we can hide anything from Him. Since this is true, why don't we make the sacrifice of talking to Him about what is going on in our hearts? As we articulate ourselves, we develop a stronger sense of a personal relationship. The Sacred Scriptures reveals the beautiful revelation that God wants to be our loving Parent, Friend, and Beloved. God wants to be all three for us based on what we need from Him the most at any given moment. As we talk to Him in this personalized manner, we open ourselves to His love and help, concerning whatever we are going through. We come to personally experience His divine care and support in those areas of our lives. God is overjoyed

whenever we let him into those parts of our lives that are so important and personal to us. He is saddened when our relationship simply remains at the level of ritual, legalism, or superficiality. Do you realize it is meant to be so much more? It is meant a mutual proclamation between us and God that “All of me, loves all of you.”

Beyond our innermost thoughts and feelings, Jesus thoroughly enjoys when we share the joys, highlights, and the positive experiences of our day with Him. Are we willing to sacrifice our illusionary sense of privacy and self-sufficiency, and invite Jesus into all those things that positively and negatively weigh on our hearts? Yes, it is true, that Jesus knows everything going within and in our lives. At the same time, He is the perfect respecter of our personal freedom. It is important to invite Him in. If we keep inviting Him into our hearts and lives, we can have the most amazing relationship with the Person who is meant to be the most important Person in our lives. In the process, we can experience the healing and salvation that comes from allowing His love, grace, and mercy to continually flow into the most wounded, broken, and darkened corners and recesses of our hearts.

That is what happens when we and Jesus Christ, do everything we can, to continually give all of our selves, to each other. It is truly the meaning and the experience of heaven on earth to live out a relationship with Jesus Christ in which our hearts, words, and actions proclaim: “Give your all to me, I’ll give my all to you. You’re my end and my beginning. Even when I lose, I’m winning. Cause I give you all of me. And you give me all of you.”