

What it means to be a 'Sacramental People.'

By Deacon Don

At the heart of our Catholic Christian faith is the conviction that a person does not have to seek God. There is no need because God has already come to find us. Our faith boldly proclaims that God made His presence visible at a particular time and place in human history in the person of Jesus Christ.

This profound claim underlies what it means for us to be a 'sacramental people.' In fact, nothing really can be said or understood about the seven Sacraments unless and until one understands Jesus to be the 'great sacrament.' Jesus, himself, in his physical humanity, is God's Sacrament. That is, He was (and is) the very real and the very visible sign of God's grace and love for us.

Only from that sacramental perspective of Jesus, can the Church's Sacraments begin to make any sense. For it is in that same line of thinking that the Church itself can be properly seen for what it is: also a Sacrament. Jesus Christ, while on Earth, gathered his people and founded the Church to continue His mission throughout time and space. And so, just as Jesus mediated God's real presence by walking in the world for a brief time, the Church continues to mediate Jesus' real presence until the end of time. The way in which the Church is to mediate that real presence to its people is through its Sacraments.

So you see, we are a sacramental people because the Sacraments are, in truth, our lifeline to God. When we receive and celebrate the Church's Sacraments, we really encounter the Church that Jesus founded. When we encounter the Church he founded, we really encounter Jesus Himself. And when we encounter Jesus, we really encounter the God who made us and loved us first.

From that perspective, we can begin to see the Sacraments for what they are: a gift from God to His people to keep them close to Him, until He comes again.

Happy Lent and God's Blessing to all of you!

For meditation: How can we, by our lives, mediate God's presence to others? Why we should view our love and concern for others as being part of the Church's 'sacramental' mission?