

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Recently I visited the St. Jude Shop, a religious goods store down in Havertown, with a friend who wasn't Catholic, actually he's not religious at all. But I'm working on that. Near the cash register he saw a display of caps with "WWJD" printed on all of them in various colors. He couldn't figure out what the letters meant. So he asked the clerk. She said that the letters stood for "What Would Jesus Do", with the intent of inspiring people to think about what Jesus would do in a certain situation.

My friend pondered that for a moment and then replied, "I don't know too much about him, but from what I've heard about your Jesus, I'm pretty sure he wouldn't pay \$17.95 for one of these caps."

While WWJD is a neat little motto, maybe it's not the right question to be asking. The better question might be, "What did Jesus actually do?" That's the stuff of the Gospel. What He did is what we ought to be modeling our lives on.

In our second reading today we hear the earliest description of what Jesus actually did and said at the Last Supper: "I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and after he had given thanks, broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes."

What Jesus did do on the last night before his death was make an extraordinary investment in the Church. That is the reason Jesus came into the world—to establish his Church. We, his Church, are to be the means by which Christ plans to transform the world. As Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 5:19-20, “He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”

We are Christ’s ambassadors. God is reconciling the world through us. Jesus didn’t merely show his confidence in his disciples 2,000 years ago, he shows confidence in you and me today who follow in his footsteps. Do you get that? God is counting on you and me to make a difference in the world today. Right now, today, in 2016, God is reconciling the world to himself through us. He has no other way to do it. He has chosen us for this work of reconciliation.

What did Jesus do? First of all he made an extraordinary investment in the Church. He wasn’t going to ask his disciples, then or now, to do what he couldn’t or wouldn’t do. The work of reconciliation was to be accomplished through his body being offered in sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary and his blood pouring out upon the earth to nourish and renew it. The “do this in remembrance of Me,” is his command that we are to do as he did—that is give our lives in sacrificial love for the sake of others.

It's perhaps fortuitous, or possibly God-given, that this Feast of the Body and Blood of the Lord is followed by our celebration of Memorial Day in our country tomorrow. It is the day that we remember those who have died in service to our country. While we specifically remember our war-dead, we also remember those who died, serving our nation in other capacities—our assassinated presidents, ambassadors, government agents, and first responders. All died giving sacrificial service.

It is worth remembering at least one such hero. The Medal of Honor was posthumously awarded to Navy Seal Michael Monsoor. His platoon in Iraq came under enemy attack during 75% of their missions. In May, 2006, Mike and another SEAL ran into the line of fire to save a wounded teammate. With bullets flying all around them, Mike returned fire with one hand while helping pull the injured man to safety with the other. In a dream about the incident months later, the wounded SEAL saw Mike coming to the rescue with wings on his shoulders.

Only 3 months later, Michael Monsoor would make the ultimate sacrifice. Mike and two teammates had taken position on a rooftop when an insurgent grenade bounced off Mike's chest and landed on the roof. He had a clear chance to escape, but he realized the other two SEALs did not. In that terrible moment, he had two options: to save himself, or to save his friends. For Mike, this was no choice at all. He threw himself onto the grenade, and absorbed the blast with his body. One of the survivors put it this way: "Mikey looked death in the face and that day said, "You cannot take my brothers. I will go in their stead." And that is what he did. As Jesus himself said, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Nothing significant in this world takes place without someone making a sacrifice. Christ would not ask his disciples to give their lives in this ministry of reconciliation if he was unwilling to set an example. He knew what he had to do. It had been foretold by the Prophet, Isaiah, 400 years earlier. “He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him; and by his wounds we are healed.

What did our Lord do on the night he was betrayed? He made an extraordinary investment in the Church. He showed us how this ministry of reconciliation would come about—through his broken body and shed blood. Thus he gave us a ritual by which we could remember our calling. We call it THE MASS!

One of our twelve year old youngsters recently asked his Grandmother why she came to Mass almost every day. What did she get out of it? She looked at him with great seriousness and said, “Our Lord asked his friends not to forget him. I am one of his friends. I do not forget him.”

That’s who we are—friends of Jesus. We gather at this table week after week to remember him. He has called us his friends to build up His Kingdom on the earth. We also are to make an extraordinary investment in His Church knowing that it is through the Church that he is reconciling the world to himself. Each time we eat of His Body and drink of His Blood we are pledging our sacrificial service to Him in serving His Church in continuing His ministry of reconciliation.

The remembrance of the sacrifice of Navy SEAL Michael Monsoor and the 10s of thousands who have given their lives in service to our country, assuring our safety, security, and freedom as Americans, is the point of tomorrow's celebration.

It is the sacrifice of those of us who seek to do as Jesus did, making an extraordinary investment of ourselves in the Church who will bring about the time when the world will be reconciled to God. Though it is fragmented at present, there will come a time when our world will be healed and made whole. Though it is filled with hatred and strife, it will one day be a world of peace and good will. That is the promise of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

WWJD! What would Jesus do? He would continue to invest in his church. He would continue reconciling the world to himself. He would continue to lay down his life that his kingdom of love and light may come upon this earth. And that is what he would have us do as well in celebrating this Mass, then calling us to go forth into the world to reconcile it to God.

In today's Gospel he even tells us how to do it when he tells the Twelve, "Give them some food yourselves." He blesses their sacrificial offering of all that they had, a few loaves and a couple of fish, and feeds thousands with it. Imagine what the Lord could do with us if we really gave sacrificially of all that we have! Yet that is the only way the Lord has given us to be the Church he has called us to be—a Church that transforms the world.

In remembrance of Me eat this bread; in remembrance of Me drink this wine; in remembrance of me pray for the time when God's own will is done. In remembrance of me heal the sick; in remembrance of me feed the poor; in remembrance of me open the door and let your brother in, let him in. Take eat and be comforted; drink and remember too, that this is my body and precious blood shed for you, shed for you. In remembrance of me search for truth; in remembrance of me always love; in remembrance of me don't look above, but in your heart, in your heart, look in your heart for God. Do this in remembrance of me! Do this in remembrance of me! In remembrance of me!