

Bishop Jaime Soto  
Homily for Chrism Mass, April 10, 2014

“To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his Blood, who has made us into a Kingdom, priests for his God and Father, to him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.”

“El nos ama y por su sangre nos ha purificado de nuestros pecados, haciendo de nosotros un reino y una raza de sacerdotes de Dios, su Padre. A él la gloria y el poder por los siglos de los siglos. Amén.” (Rev. 1.5-6)

A commonly seen medieval metaphor portrays the Lord Jesus crucified on the cross with a two separate streams, one of blood and the other of water flowing from his side. There are two angels stationed on either side of the cross. One is gathering the water into a baptismal pool. The other is gathering the blood into a chalice. This graphic image conveys the wounded side of Christ as the fount of the sacramental living stream that purifies and nourishes the Church. La llaga del costado de Cristo crucificado es la fuente inagotable por donde manan el agua y la sangre que vivifican toda la vida sacramental de la iglesia.

El sacrificio de la cruz es la obra central de la salvación. Ninguna obra de iglesia tiene eficacia o sentido fuera de un enlace muy íntimo con la sangre preciosa que nos ha salvado.

What startlingly illustrates the sacrificial nature of baptism and the Eucharist is true of all the sacraments of the Church. From the five wounds of Christ flows the grace of penance and the anointing of the sick. “By his wounds we have been healed.” (I Pt. 2.24) Jesus is the new Adam. While the Lord hung from the cross in the sleep of death, from the pierced side was born his bride the Church. Nourished in this mystical love both man and woman must love one another as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her. (Eph. 5.25) With his dying breath the Lord gave us his spirit and so anoints the disciples in the royal priesthood of the faithful confirming us as an acceptable offering to the Father.

As the words from the Book of Revelation remind us, Jesus loved us and freed us from our sins by his blood. The sacramental life of the Church flows from the sacrificial life of Jesus. This is the new life, the fullness of life into which all the faithful are immerse, anointed, nourished, healed, and wedded. La vida plena de Dios será mejor realizada en la vida entregada, la vida sacrificada. This sacrificial nature of the Christian life is the priestly character that is the fragrance of Christ in the world. The wondrous love of God is made manifest on the cross. Through the cross the Lord Jesus consecrates us in the saving truth of his undying love. No seamos atraídos por la ilusión engañosa de

una cultura de consumo y una ética utilitaria. We can only know this truth by loving one another as he has loved us. Deseemos conocer solo a Cristo, el crucificado y buscarlo en el más pequeño de nuestros hermanos. This mystery makes us tremble, tremble, tremble when the sacraments takes us there when they crucified our Lord. Our joy will be complete when, like Paul, we seek to make complete what is lacking in the passion of the Christ. (Col. 1.24) Not that his sacrifice is lacking but that sharing in his priesthood is what is lacking in us. El gozo de Cristo alcanzará su plenitud en nosotros en la medida que nuestra vida sea un reflejo de su entrega generosa.

In this mystery, you, my brother priests and I must constantly examine ourselves. Our share in the ministerial priesthood of the Lord Jesus is always at the service of the royal priesthood of the faithful. Our ministry is more than a function or a series of carefully observed ritual practices. Our ministry is perfected when we unite ourselves more personally to the sacrifice of Christ. The sacramental union with the crucified Christ is more apparent when we willingly and joyfully become effective signs of the shepherd who gives his life for the Church. The faithful are drawn closer to the redeeming cross when the one who acts “in persona Christi” makes his own the words of the Master, “as I have done so you must do.” (Jn. 13.15)

Our prayer for the Church and for the world must be unceasing. Penance and fasting for our sins as well as others should be integral part of our confessional ministry. Personal charity will help us bring the Eucharist – the sacrament of charity – more effectively into the world.

Like John the Baptist, let us remember that we are the friends of the bridegroom. “The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, (the friend of the groom) who stands and listens for him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. ... He must increase; I must decrease.” (Jn. 3.29-30)

“Es necesario que él crezca y que yo disminuya.”