

Ascension Homily Outline

*That certainly is a welcome change, and I am very happy that we are more and more returning to normal especially here in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy. We will not in any way be requiring people to present proof of vaccination – **and nobody here should think they can or should ask someone else about whether they've been vaccinated.***

THESE SIGNS WILL ACCOMPANY THOSE WHO BELIEVE:
IN MY NAME THEY WILL DRIVE OUT DEMONS,
THEY WILL SPEAK NEW LANGUAGES.
THEY WILL PICK UP SERPENTS WITH THEIR HANDS,
AND IF THEY DRINK ANY DEADLY THING, IT WILL NOT HARM THEM.
THEY WILL LAY HANDS ON THE SICK, AND THEY WILL RECOVER.

The healing mission of the church isn't accomplished ordinarily through the sensational and dramatic – instead it is a humble and simple, work that Christ accomplishes in the Church through the Sacraments.

Be Transformed: The Healing Power of the Sacraments. By Dr. Bob Schuchts

“The sacraments are God’s chosen remedy for healing our deadly wounds and infusing our souls with Christ’s resurrection”

“Healing is a life-changing encounter with God’s love and truth. Whereas sin fragments us, the Father’s love restores us to wholeness in Christ. This occurs most effectively through the sacraments as God’s healing love reaches the depths of our being. In the words of St. John Paul II: “The Holy Spirit [working through the sacraments] . . . purifies from everything that disfigures man . . . , he heals even the deepest wounds of human existence.” Over time, God’s healing progressively restores us to our true identity.”

1. My vocation – confession – day in and day out – slowly making progress through living a sacramental life

What is your own experience of the power of the Sacraments?

- Does the Eucharist have an effect on your daily life?
- Does the fact that you were confirmed seem to give some direction to your life?
- How does going to confession impact you?

“When Jesus gave us the sacraments of our redemption, they literally cost him everything—his entire life. He poured out his tears and his blood for us like the woman poured out her tears and ointment.

He did not intend for our faith practices to be meaningless rituals of formality where we keep our polite distance. Rather, he desires for them to be living encounters with him, enabling us to die to our false selves, so that the Holy Spirit can fill us to overflowing with Jesus' resurrection life (see CCC, 1091–1092)."

2. The power of the Sacraments to meet our needs from Be Transformed: The Healing Power of the Sacraments. By Dr. Bob Schuchts

Rejection – I am not loved; not wanted
Abandonment – I am alone; no one cares
Powerlessness – I feel overwhelmed; I can't do anything
Confusion – I don't understand; it doesn't make sense
Fear – If I trust I will be hurt; I'm not safe
Shame I am bad, dirty, stupid etc.; it's all my fault
Hopelessness – This will never change; I'm weary

Response in each Sacrament:

In **Baptism** the sense or the experience of rejection is overcome

In the **Eucharist** – that sense or experience or fear of abandonment is overcome by the abiding presence of the Lord

In **Confirmation** that sense of powerlessness and being overwhelmed is overcome by the Holy Spirit who anoints us with power

In **Holy Orders** the loving and merciful authority of the Father is made present overcoming the confusion of the world

In the Sacrament of **Matrimony** – the faithful love of God is experienced which overcomes fear

In the Sacrament of **Confession** that sense, and experience of shame is overcome as we are restored to innocence and purity

In the **Anointing of the Sick** hopelessness is overcome by faith in heaven and eternal life

3. Why do we not experience healing and transformation in the Sacraments?

The preacher of the Pontifical Household, Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa:

Catholic theology can help us understand how a sacrament can be valid and legal but "unreleased." A sacrament is called "unreleased" if its fruit remains bound, or unused, because of the absence of certain conditions that further its efficacy.

Here we need to recall the classical doctrine about sacraments. Sacraments are not magic rites that act mechanically, without people's knowledge or collaboration. Their efficacy is the result of a synergy, or collaboration, between divine omnipotence (that is, the grace of Christ and of the Holy Spirit) and free will.

To put it more precisely, the fruit of the sacrament depends wholly on divine grace; however, this divine grace does not act without the "yes"—the consent and affirmation—of the person.