

May 2025 ---- Knights Reflection

From our March Meeting -- tonight we are going to continue the “Live Truth – Live Catholic” thoughts tonight, but first a little clarification. I was questioned as to when I had stated that we, as Catholics, were the new “Chosen”. **Does that mean – that God has abandoned the Jewish people?** The simple answer is NO. As noted in CCC 674, “Israel’s Hope”, and in Paul’s Letter to the Romans, Chapter 11 – the “Partial Rejection of Israel” -- as was then with Gentiles & all people today -- they have the same opportunity to convert until the end-of-time. Likewise, although not a consensus, many theologians point to the Book of Revelation as indicating that Jews, who had lived their life faithfully to the Old Covenant, until the-end-of-time, will be judged ---- alike worthy Christians and those who are still in Purgatory.

Getting back to living the Truth. Nancy & I were on a Cruise in February. One of the complications of a long boat ride is “What do you do about your Sunday Mass obligation?”. We take that obligation not only seriously but as a challenge - as there is almost always a way. This has seen us at Sunday Mass’s in some very remote spots – with different languages - but the Mass is always the same. The Holland America Line almost always has a “priest-on-board”; but, this trip, we were on Princess.

Our first Sunday was in Cabo San Lucas, the next Sunday is only a \$12.00 cab ride from the LA Port, the next Sunday was in Honolulu, but the last Sunday was “at Sea”. Ordinarily, in the case of an impossibility to attend Mass, we would plan to spend a couple of hours on our knees in our stateroom as in this case; but, one morning we see a Priest at breakfast. We start a conversation – obviously happy that our “Day-at-Sea” and missing Mass situation was alleviated. Well, maybe short-lived. In our immediate conversation at Breakfast, I noted how fortunate it was that we would have Mass after all (i.e., his saying Mass) as we hated the idea of missing Mass for any reason. The Priest answered, **“.... you know, sometimes the Church makes too-much about what we do ‘once-a-week’ and forgets about the rest of the week!”**. Well that immediately set me onto – what is this Guy saying? Responding to him with *“Going to Mass on Sunday is only an Hour (two hours with transportation) – is only 1 or 2% of your entire week”*. Nevertheless, we are elated to see a Priest on-board, so Nancy starts asking where he is from and the like. Myself, I see him turn away taking the opportunity to end his conversation with me – as – he turns directly away from me and takes-up a conversation with Nancy. After we leave the Dining

room, I state that I didn't believe that he was a real Priest – at the time - her in total disagreement.

We saw him on a couple other occasions – and he pretty much looks to avoid us. So, a couple of weeks later is the “At-Sea” Sunday and although not listed on the Ship’s Schedule, Nancy finds-out that Mass is at 5:30 Saturday evening. I agree to go with a positive attitude – but suspicious at least. Afterall, I have seen many Masses conducted in non-church setting in the Prison Ministry. I immediately note that he is using a Common Table which is not unusual; but he does not have a Corporal Cloth. He has a Mass Kit for the Vessels, but the Cloth Kit is still setting on the Table. He has a laptop sitting on the Table connected to a Widescreen TV, with which he is navigating from various “PDF Downloads” of portions of the Order of the Mass but, once he gets the sequence out-of-order. He had a volunteer as a reader, and I could see that the “Reader” like myself had already read the Reading for that Sunday – as he stumped looking for the right reading. The Priest (clearly now an imposter) states “I know that these readings are not the same as I the Lectionary for today, but I often do not see the relationship that the Church uses in their selection. The truth – he has his “Fake” Sermon remembered to other readings/Gospel – about 3-4 minutes in length. At about the 12-minute mark, I am pretty convinced that he is an “Imposter” – so I start more observation. I note that his Priest Clothing is impeccably new/clean, a Gold Chained Rosary hanging from his Belt, he is not wearing any of the minimum Vestments, he has a large Gold Watch, and no, not one, but two heavy Gold Bracelets and the same with two Rings. He stumbles somewhat through the Consecration, and I have already turned to Nancy – shrugging my shoulders a couple of times. I can see that she is already sharing my observations. We are now at Communion (about 25 Souls Present) and he says the “unthinkable” – “if any of you are not Catholic – you are welcome to partake with us”. He gets to the end of the first row and drops two Hosts on the floor – he looks as shocked as the guy in front of him – but he simply picks them up and sets them on the corner of the bare table. Nancy and I are in the second row and a line is forming to the front – She says, “What do you think?” I respond “We do not know (i.e., if REAL-or not) and maybe should not sit in judgement” – so we step forward. He clumsily washes the Vessels as he has no water --- and finally --- the Mass is now over, and people are leaving. I tug on his shoulder and point to the

Hosts still setting on the Bare Table, he says, “he knows” and we start to leave, but Nancy has had enough, she circles back and begins to lecture him that the “Body-of-Christ” – “is just setting there”. Him basically ignoring her. I now circle back and explain that we just should leave as that is not the “Body-of-Christ” and he is definitely - an imposter.

So, [page 2](#) is a long oration that I’ll leave in the “Written Form” for on-line reading, and I’ll paraphrase in tonight’s Meeting as how “REAL and TRUE” our Catholic Faith is in comparison to other faiths that are merely “their formed mimics” of selected portions of ours. As Nancy and me on our cruise – and no matter how much we wanted to have something to be TRUE (i.e., the possibility of a Mass during our “At-Sea Days”) – because we understand truth --- we can immediately recognize an Imposter and the corrupted service, in this case, as not the “TRUTH”. In closing upon the Fraudulent Priest – after the Fake-Mass, we avoided him on the ship – so that we would not be placed in a position of judgment – as his judgement will be from God. Regardless, on the last day of the vacation, we are sitting in the LA Airport at the Detroit bound flight’s Boarding Gate, and we both happen to look up at the same time as we see him walking past in the main aisle --- this time he is also wearing a Bishops Zucchetto (the little beanie). We turn to each other and had a great laugh.

So, back to tonight’s Meeting. For the most of us as “Cradle Catholics”, in having the Catholic Faith with us for our entire lives, we can get quite “assuming” at times. For many of us, it is not until a “**life experience**” shakes our faith in either a pro or con direction ----- do we become reinvigorated. For some of us, maybe that time has not yet come, and we are still living in the mundane - yet to be awakened.

Therefore, as a better testimonial than our Cruise experience – are Catholic converts and those who have not only, left the Faith; but may have intentionally left it and in some cases - sworn-it-off - yet have returned to FAITH.

In the most relevant case of leaving the faith and returning, we need-not look any further than our previous Priest, Father Mike Cilibraise. Father Mike, then the Chief of Police at Ferris State, was called back to the Faith at “Self-Service Pump #4” at a Gas Station in Big Rapids. We all know what a turnaround that was in experiencing his Faithfulness.

In the case of Converts, we need not look any further than our Parish Staff. Past Staff of Cory and Carla and current Staff including our Greg Smith.

Or even in this room in Glen Berghorst and his wife Ruth. I have; but if you engage them into conversation about their Catholic Faith, they can talk not

only about their experience in converting; but their emotional journey in the conversion - talking about “the substance of Faith, the depth of Faith, and the realness of Faith”.

One thing in common with both those that have experienced a revival of sorts ---- and those converting from other faiths --- is that there is **no possible way** that we or they would either leave or even ignore their Faith; because, as we heard throughout Lent, it is the One True Faith left for us on earth by Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself saying that He was the Truth and the Life. Gentlemen, we are living the “TRUTH!”.