

TALK NO. 2
"HUMILITY AS THE KEY TO LIVING ENTRUSTED"

- ① What's the one thing I want them to know?
 - Humility is constitutive to living Jesus' priesthood that has been entrusted to us
- ② Why do they need to know it?
 - Because they won't go to Confession if they aren't humble
- ③ What's the one thing I want them to do?
 - Go to Confession
- ④ Why do they need to do it?
 - Because healthy presbyterates are comprised of healthy priests



QUICK OUTLINE OF TALK NO. 2

- ① Opening image, draw them in (0:00-3:00)
 - No one has the life we have (positive)
- ② Build tension (3:00-8:00)
 - No one has the life we have (negative)
- ③ Set the hook, give them a reason to keep listening (8:00-10:00)
 - "On the day of my ordination I gave my life to God and I've been fighting with him since trying to take it back."
- ④ Core message (10:00-11:00)
 - If you want to live *his* priesthood, and not "my" priesthood, we must live the virtue of humility
- ⑤ Root the core message in something they trust (11:00-15:00)
 - Return to, and unpack, Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 Chrism Mass quote
- ⑥ Unpack core message: Point no. 1 (15:00-23:00)
 - Humility is determined by posture: The posture of a married man vs. the posture of a bachelor
- ⑦ Unpack core message: Point no. 2 (23:00-31:00)
 - Humility is requires authentic gratitude: The end result is gratitude vs. the motivation is entitlement
- ⑧ Unpack core message: Point no. 3 (31:00-39:00)
 - Humility leads to repentance: Repentance for sin vs. rationalizing sin
- ⑨ Call to action (39:00-47:00)
 - Go to Confession ... *today*
- ⑩ Closing (47:00-50:00)
 - You have a choice of whether or not you are going to die to self, and here's what's at stake

① Opening image, draw them in (0:00-3:00)

- No one has the life we have. 😊
- We are expected to be masters of the one on one. In other words, we are expected to be marriage counselors and spiritual directors. We are expected to be available for Confession and Anointing of the Sick. We are expected to be great listeners. However, we are also expected to have sage advice that can either fix their problem or give them comfort in distress. And, we are expected to do all of this while being available at a moment's notice whenever any one of our parishioners needs one on one help.
- At the same time, we are expected to be evangelists. Most of our parishioners are on our property once a week at Sunday Mass and most of them are looking to us for "something" during the homily. We are expected to be masters with every homily: it needs to be inspiring, yet it needs to balance the tension between those who ask us to teach more versus those who ask us to tell more stories. Every homily is expected to be relevant to the non-churched and orthodox for the more traditional parishioners, and it needs to feel like it "moves" fast enough to keep the younger ones listening. Within a singular Sunday sitting at merely one Mass we have at least four distinct generations, each of whom wants different things from our preaching. And, o by the way, do that in ten minutes please because according to some: "Mass is never supposed to last more than an hour."
- We are expected to be leaders. We are expected to manage, inspire, and lead our staff. We are expected to know Canon Law, diocesan policies, and the latest documents from Pope Francis and the USCCB. We are expected to be visionary in where we're going, while at the same time mindful that people don't like change. We are expected to take into consideration the history of the parish and the latest trends of evangelization, while at the same time none of us find it pleasant to confront entrenched leadership and parishioners who have their own agendas.
- But, hold on. There's more, isn't there?
- We are expected to be bold. We are expected to be pastoral. We are expected to "smell like the sheep". Some complain that we need to be available and on campus, while at the exact same time others exhort us to be more seen at the hospital, at our Catholic schools, and in the homes of parishioners.
- At any and every moment we are expected to be "on." On any given day we might prepare a soul for impending death while at the same time Baptize new life. Perhaps on that very same day we might be asked to yield the power of God in Baptism's exorcism, or Confessions absolution, or Viaticum's plenary indulgence. And, on that same day we are expected to have balance: to pray, exercise, maintain friendships, and commit to on-going formation.
- Who does this? Who on earth has a life like that? We do.
- Brothers, that's our life: the pressure to be "on", the constant "putting out fires", the tension between everything that is in front of us competing for everything required to move the parish forward. Who does this? Who on earth has a life like this? We do.

② Build tension (3:00-8:00)

- No one has the life we have ... and that's dangerous. ☹
- There are three toxic threats entrenched in the culture of American priesthood
- Threat no. 1: Unrivaled comfort and security
 - ▶ No man in America is guaranteed a paycheck. None. Not one. No one.
 - ▶ No man in America is employed with the lack of professional accountability we enjoy. None. Not one. No one.
 - ▶ We are guaranteed a paycheck. A house. Health insurance. No man in America is guaranteed that. Not one.
 - ▶ 99% of us spend what we want on food, liquor, and household items. Few men in America have that. And, 99% of your parishioners don't spend what we spend.
 - ▶ We can say what we want, do what we want, change what we want, not do what we choose not to do — and we still get paid, live as we want, will no accountability (in reality).
- Threat no. 2: A.I.
 - ▶ I'm not talking about "artificial intelligence." I am presenting "authority" and "isolation."
 - ▶ Priests can easily live in seduction that they are the king of their castle and the "authority" in their parish. We can preach the words of the *Catechism*, and we feel we have the "authority" to do so. You can preach the from the editorial page of the *National Catholic Reporter* or the *National Catholic Register*, and we feel we have the "authority" to do so. Because we live an unparalleled professional life of zero accountability, we become conditioned to thinking "I have the authority" to say what I want, even if that is in direct contradiction to the authority of the Holy Father (in 2023), the Holy See (in 2023), the USCCB (in 2023), or Archbishop of Louisville (in 2023).
 - ▶ Priests also live in isolation: physical, emotional, intellectual, relational, etc.
 - ▶ "Artificial" authority + isolation = (leads to, fosters) = narcissism
- Threat no. 3: There's no sofa
 - ▶ Every husband I know who acts like some priests act would sleep on the sofa.
 - ▶ Unfortunately, there's no "sofa." No one calls us out.

- ③ Set the hook, give them a reason to keep listening (8:00-10:00)
 - “On the day of my ordination I gave my life to God and I’ve been fighting with him since trying to take it back.”
- ④ Core message (10:00-11:00)
 - If you want to live *his* priesthood, and not “my” priesthood, we must live the virtue of humility
- ⑤ Root the core message in something they trust (11:00-15:00)

- The Priesthood of Jesus Christ only makes sense when we voluntarily choose — *everyday* — to die to self
- Did not Christ say of himself: “I am the truth” (cf. John 14:6)?
Is he not himself the living Word of God, to which every other word refers?
Sanctify them in the truth — this means, then, in the deepest sense: make them one with me, Christ.
Bind them to me. Draw them into me.
Indeed, when all is said and done, there is only one priest of the New Covenant, Jesus Christ himself.
Consequently, the priesthood of the disciples can only be a participation in the priesthood of Jesus. Our being priests is simply a new and radical way of being united to Christ.
In its substance, it has been bestowed on us for ever in the sacrament.
But this new seal imprinted upon our being can become for us a condemnation,
if our lives do not develop by entering into the truth of the Sacrament.
The promises we renew today state in this regard that our will must be directed along this path:
“Domino Iesu arctius coniungi et conformari, vobismetipsis abrenuntiantes”.

Being united to Christ calls for renunciation.

It means not wanting to impose our own way and our own will, not desiring to become someone else, but abandoning ourselves to him, however and wherever he wants to use us.

As Saint Paul said: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).

In the words “I do”, spoken at our priestly ordination,
we made this fundamental renunciation of our desire to be independent, “self-made”.
But day by day this great “yes” has to be lived out in the many little “yeses” and small sacrifices.
This “yes” made up of tiny steps which together make up the great “yes”,
can be lived out without bitterness and self-pity only if Christ is truly the center of our lives.
If we enter into true closeness to him.
Then indeed we experience, amid sacrifices which can at first be painful,
the growing joy of friendship with him,
and all the small and sometimes great signs of his love,
which he is constantly showing us.
“The one who loses himself, finds himself”.
When we dare to lose ourselves for the Lord, we come to experience the truth of these words.

— *Pope Benedict XVI, 2009 Chrism Mass*

⑥ Unpack core message: Point no. 1 (15:00-23:00)

- Humility is determined by posture
- The posture of a married man vs. the posture of a bachelor
- The posture of a “married” man:
 1. Intentionally and relentlessly available to the other
 2. Intentionally and relentlessly seen and known by the other
 3. Intentionally and relentlessly chooses the other (spouse, kids) rather than himself
 4. Requires a surrender to the suffering of self-denial and self-restraint
 5. Husbands tend to hang out with other husbands
- The posture of a “bachelor”
 1. Available to whom he wants, when he wants, and on his terms
 2. Hiding is an option, one that seduces the man into false consolation
 3. Chooses what he wants, when he wants, and how he wants
 4. The posture, and the culture, condition him to use others for his own pleasure
 5. Confuse “suffering” with annoyance
 6. Annoyance leads to resentment, and resentment with the wrong “support system” leads to anger
 7. Bachelors tend to hang out with other bachelors
- Husbands are confronted with reality and must live in reality
- Bachelors may be tempted to live in fantasy
- Many priests start out with the posture of a “husband” in the horizontal sense, not the vertical sense; this can lead to disillusionment and eventually they may atrophy into bachelors
- At the heart of this all is my posture: am I intentionally and relentlessly available to God or not?

⑦ Unpack core message: Point no. 2 (23:00-31:00)

- Humility is requires authentic gratitude: The *end* result is gratitude vs. the motivation is entitlement
- When I live my life intentionally and relentlessly available to God I grow in awe of his mercy
- “We all need love. Unfortunately, we all need more than we deserve.”
- Gratitude is the *result* of something, actually someone.
- Authentic gratitude is not a response to what I have been given, but who has given me what I receive.
- Authentic gratitude is about the giver, not the gift.
- Authentic gratitude requires the posture of the “spouse” not the bachelor.
- Authentic gratitude requires intentional and relentless self-awareness.
- The posture of the bachelor may unknowingly replace what I long for, what I need vs. what I deserve.
- The opposite of gratitude is entitlement.
- The opposite of gratitude is self-sufficiency.

⑧ Unpack core message: Point no. 3 (31:00-39:00)

- Authentic gratitude leads to repentance
- The heart of a humble man is authentically contrite because of *who* I have taken for granted, not because I made a mistake in pursuit of self-perfection
- The heart of a humble man is moved to repentance for sin
- The heart of a bachelor replaces repentance vs. rationalize
- The entitled mindset of the bachelor + the bachelors he surrounds himself with = rationalizing my sin

⑨ Call to action (39:00-47:00)

- Go to Confession ... *today*
- Healthy presbyterates are comprised of healthy priests
- “The Church is always born a new in repentance.”

⑩ Closing (47:00-50:00)

- You have a choice of whether or not you are going to die to self, and here’s what’s at stake