

THE PASTOR'S DESK

June 6, 2010 - REALLY ?



Dear Parishioners,

In the days of our fathers, a handshake was a handshake. A man's word was his bond. A "yes" meant a yes and a "no" meant a no, just as the Bible proscribes. When you say yes, or in Christianspeak, "amen", does your yes really mean that?

Amen is a word we hear almost every day of our lives. If we are people of faith, people of prayer, people of the Word, *amen* is part of our intrinsic vocabulary. *Amen* means yes, or I affirm, or I believe, or I acknowledge. It is a word of power, a word of conviction, a word from the heart.

All throughout the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the priest and people say *amen*. After the sign of the cross, after the opening and closing prayers, after the Eucharistic prayer, we acclaim our affirmation.

Now here comes the hard part. Do you really believe that during the consecration at the Mass, that the priest takes ordinary bread and wine and makes those elements into the Body and Blood of Christ? In the depth of your heart, mind, and soul, can you say *amen* to the fact that the Sacred Host is Christ Himself, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity?

If you can't, then you're not a Catholic. It's that hard, it's that simple. There are plenty of other churches around. Just take a drive down Muncaster Mill Road, there are about twenty to choose from.

And how do you live out that *amen* ? Reverent respect in front of the Blessed Sacrament? Time spent in Eucharistic Adoration? Kneeling or bowing at the sight of the tabernacle?

In my grandfather's time, men would tip their hats when they walked by a Catholic church, because they knew that Our Lord was present in the tabernacle. It was a very popular custom at one time for people to stop in at Catholic churches to "pay a visit" to the Blessed Sacrament (when churches were open during the day-not anymore). In other countries, I've seen people kneel in front of churches walking past on the sidewalk.

Remember, when it comes to our faith, it's fashionable to be old-fashioned.

There was a very famous Cistercian monk whose name was Fr. Louis. We know him as Thomas Merton. He wrote great works of piety and devotion. He was a spiritual leader to many in his lifetime, and his books are still widely read today. His autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, is considered a modern spiritual classic.

As a young man, Merton was what we would call a lapsed Episcopalian. In fact he was more likely than not to be an atheist. Soon, however, God started chasing him down like the hound of heaven. This dissolute young man, who thought nothing of the faith once delivered unto the saints, began pouring over the bounteous reservoir of Catholic literature.

One of the major transformations in his spiritual life was during a visit to Cuba in the late 1930s. He was at a shrine of Our Lady on a day when hundreds of children were receiving their First Holy Communion. An usher seated him close to the action. Merton was mesmerized, bowled over, re-created, as he heard the priest say over and over again "Corpus Christi" and those little children all responded "amen." Two years later, he was in the monastery.

The power of that word *amen* has no bounds. Do you really believe that?

**In Christ,
Fr. William Brailsford**

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Feast of the Sacred Heart and Closing of the Year for Priests

In thanksgiving for our priests and the gift of priesthood, please join us for a Holy Hour of special prayers following the 9:00 am Mass on June 11th. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed. Confessions will be heard before and after Mass to gain the plenary indulgence offered for this special occasion, the closing of the Year for Priests.

Join us as well, at 3:00 pm that same day, for the Divine Mercy Chaplet to focus our attention on Christ's will for us: mercy and forgiveness through the priestly ministry.