

Homily: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Cycle C: 2021: Neh 8: 2-4a, 5-6, 8-10; Ps 19; 1 Corth 12: 12-30; Lk 1: 1-4; 4: 14-21

***“The Gift of being part of the Mystical Body of Christ”***

1. St. Paul today speaks about the concept of the Church as the “**Mystical Body of Christ**”, meaning we all have a distinct role to play in the Church just as each part of our physical body has an important and unique role to play for the whole Body to function well. **This is a very important concept to grasp in order to grow in holiness on a daily basis.** And also especially when we are young, to discern the vocation God is calling us to. **We are truly all in this together; there is to be no simply “me and Jesus” individualistic spirituality in the Church** - we have to be concerned about the spiritual well-being of everyone. How can we do this in a practical way, when it can seem like an abstraction? And in the very individualistic society that we all live in?
2. St. Paul says, ***“If one part (of the Mystical Body of the Church) suffers, all parts suffer with it.”*** This is a great spiritual insight by St. Paul and also **the hidden spiritual gift of earthly life** that we often times allow to go by the wayside or even waste. As the Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen once said, in light of eternity, *“there is nothing worst than wasted suffering.”* What does that mean? Well, that *we need to consciously take our daily cross – which are all the sufferings, challenges and frustrations, whether they be physical, mental, emotional or spiritual (and each day is little different) and consciously offer them to God - not only for our own purification and deeper conversion of heart, but also for the conversion of others.* **How do we do this?** First by making **a morning offering** each day to the Lord of ***everything*** we will experience that day, both pleasant and unpleasant, in union with Jesus on the Cross and with all the Masses (the renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross) throughout the world in company with our Blessed Mother and all the angels and saints. It takes a minute, if that - but we need to get in the habit of doing it **FIRST** thing in the morning. Then **throughout the day** to regularly ask the Holy Spirit to help us to get into the habit of mind, of consciously uniting the sufferings and frustrations we

experience, with Jesus, for the sake of the Mystical Body of the Church. **Our Lady talked about this at Fatima as essential for the conversion of hardened sinners; along with doing extra acts of prayer, penance, and spiritual sacrifice for that same intention.** Remember the example, I spoke about on Christmas, *of that poor, but holy, peasant farmer in the mountains of Columbia who prayed and offered his sufferings and the spiritual sacrifice of making a pilgrimage for that dentist lady who was a very hardened sinner, and his prayers and sacrifices helped save her from going to Hell. This is the real deal!* And if over time, we consciously and generously offer our suffering to God as an act of prayer and penance for others, we also will break out of the fallen human nature habit of complaining about our sufferings, telling others about them to try to get a little ounce of sympathy, and often feeling sorry for ourselves. Instead we will offer them consciously to the Lord, and He will help us to grow in holiness by embracing the unique Cross He daily sends us or permits us to go through in love for our own sanctification and the sanctification of others! The fruit will be a deep inner peace and joy as a result of cooperating in this way with the Holy Spirit. God is never outdone in generosity and kindness toward those who love Him.

3. **What a noble endeavor this all is.** This brought to my mind the reality that the March for Life was on Friday of this past week. That sadly we as a Church and a nation recall the infamous Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in our country in 1973, an evil that has snuffed out tens of millions of lives in the past 50 years – not just the babies, but also all the people involved in it - as it leads to a real spiritual death, until repented of and made reparation for. It truly boggles the mind, but we need to remember never to give up the good fight for the pro-life cause; and the best way spiritually we can do our part to help bring about the victory for Life someday, hopefully soon, is to make it one of our daily intentions, when we offer *our sufferings, daily duties and prayers up to the Lord.* And to pray daily: *for the conversion of all those who support abortion in our country and world, and for repentance and healing for those who have been involved in this evil in any way.* We are all in this together. God bless you