

Fifth Sunday of Easter
Fourth Sunday after Easter (Latin Mass)
May 7, 2023
Year of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ark of the New Covenant

“Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.” (First Corinthians 3:16-17)

In his small book The Holy Ghost our Greatest Friend, Rev. Paul O’Sullivan, echoing the words of Saint Paul, quoted above, writes: *“Every soul in the state of grace is a living tabernacle of the Holy Ghost, and as we are obliged to adore and honor Jesus Christ on the altar, so too are we obliged to honor the Holy Ghost in our souls.”* (p. 8). My dear family, let us reflect upon this reality by inquiring of ourselves a question. Do I, (insert your name), believe this statement to be true—I am a Temple of the Holy Spirit?

In our youngest days in Catechism classes, we were taught that through our being reborn in the waters of Baptism we had now become a Temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwelt within us as long as we did not evict Him due to our choosing to succumb to the temptation to sin mortally. Some here may have heard this expressed in a similar way in these words: As long as you do not break one of the Ten Commandments (i.e., to commit mortal sin), then the Holy Spirit dwells in you. Now, dear family, I present the Christian spiritual conundrum for many: How is this concretely felt or even understood? Any Bishop, Priest, or Deacon can stand in a pulpit on any given Sunday and remind us of this departure. Yet, and please do not answer this out loud, have you, after committing a mortal sin, felt different in any perceivable way? We, humans, are emotional, as well as intellectual beings. And this is what makes our Christian religion quite unreasonable or utterly unbelievable for a growing number of individuals. Proper worship of God, Religion, first begins in the intellect and, due to our living in a society steeped in the emotional experience, many have expressed feeling no difference when they are in a state of mortal sin, as opposed to being in a state of grace. This is vitally important. They do not “feel” the Holy Spirit departing, they do not “see” the Holy Spirit departing, therefore, how do they really know or even understand the Presence of the Holy Spirit either being within them or departed from them?

This train of thought leads us to return to our initial question of believing we are Temples of the Holy Spirit. To remind us that we are Temples, various leaders have thought it best to tailor worship to appeal to man’s emotions. In essence, to get you to believe, I must get you to feel. We must devise a worship service which will engage your full, active participation. Has this approach, engaging emotionally with you, been successful? Statistics will provide us with the answer. Surveying the broad spectrum of Christian denominations, the answer is declining numbers of Christians attend Sunday worship services. And yet, we still persist in trying to engage an emotional response hoping that we can find that “silver bullet” which would slay this demon of apathy found within each of us.

As a counter agent to this trend, I propose a thought, not mine, but one of Pope Saint John Paul II which said, “the foundation or basis of a Christian life is characterized by an interior

prayer life which unites us to God.” The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is something I Know, rather than something I feel. The concrete proof of this reality is viewed in my actions prayerfully guided by the Holy Spirit. It is in those times of solitary prayer, quieting our minds as much as we are able, which allows the Holy Spirit to speak to us. It is in these moments that the purpose of our lives is slowly, gradually revealed to us. The purpose of my life—Union with Love for eternity. In essence, a permanent state of loving acceptance of us, as we are. As a result of this inspiration, we next desire to do those things necessary to attain this ultimate state. We want to feel it, to see it, to have a foretaste of it now, not after our death, but now, right now. Is this possible, can we experience this now? Yes, most assuredly, it is possible. How is it realized you may ask? By doing what you are doing at this exact moment—Honoring God by being in His Presence. It is by remaining in God’s Presence, fully living the Christian life. A life of honest, interior prayer, being guided by the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Truth). A life which graces us with the courage and conviction to remain in God, in Love by living the Commandments not because it “feels” good. Because we “know” it is good. I am a Temple of the Holy Spirit, therefore, I do those things which give God honor, because it is in those things that I find my joy, my fulfillment, my purpose, my God.