

Last week I went to get my haircut. The woman who cut my hair had tattoos up her arm and a nose ring. I thought we would have a great conversation. After I sat in the chair she said, "Wow. It's a long time since I cut a priest's hair before." "Oh, ok," I said (smiling).

As she began cutting my hair she said, "I don't know why, but I get more nervous around priests than I do cops." We can see why. I mean, look at these guns. A little later, she stopped and said, "I haven't been to Mass in six years. Am I going to hell?" Keep in mind that she had a scissors in her hand and it was close to my head.

"That's a really good question," which is a nice stalling tactic.

I kind of deflected by saying, "It would be really good if you joined us to worship God and thank Him for all His blessings." She paused said, "Hmm." Notice that I avoided a couple of pitfalls.

First, I did not make the judgment about her eternal destiny. I leave that God. People can always convert to Christ (or more deeply to Him) and come back to the Church. It would have been foolish to say, "yes." God knows her past, her present heart, and her future.

On the other hand, I didn't say, "You're fine. Don't worry about it." This would be dishonest. It's not fine to live apart from Eucharist, and from the Church where we support each other.

Think of a log in a fire. If you take the log out of the fire, it will become cool. The same is true for our faith in being away from Mass.

I am always saddened when I hear these stories. Baptism and the Eucharist are deeply connected. We are reborn in baptism and nourished by the Eucharist.

Today, we celebrate not only Jesus' baptism, but our baptism in Him as well. In our gospel, all three divine Persons are present. Obviously, Jesus is present. Additionally, the Father is present in the voice. *"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."* We hear this voice at Mass when the Scriptures are read. We hear this voice when we take time to pray. All of us want to hear those words, "You are my beloved child. I am very pleased with you."

And of course, the Spirit is present in the form of a dove. The Spirit that created the world, and re-created the world after Noah's flood, is poured out upon Christ (and us) in your baptism. And each time you receive the Eucharist (in a state of grace), you receive an increase of the Holy Spirit.

When teaching about baptism to our little ones, I use short statements so they can remember the basics. I say, "Sin out. God in. In the Church." All sin is wiped away – original and personal. God in. The Holy Spirit or God's own life is given to us." And in the Church. We are brought into the Church, or the community of faith where we worship God together, support each other, and serve in Christ's name.

We are brought into the Church, i.e., baptism and the Eucharist are tied together. The two always go together like a hand and a glove.

There is another tie as well. Baptism and Eucharist are tied with daily life. I love the theme of our women's retreat this year, "Beyond Sunday, Walking Daily with Jesus." We receive the Eucharist on Sunday and all the graces of the Eucharist, and extend or share them the other six days with others. There are few things more sad than someone who doesn't put into practice the graces received at Mass: Catholic on Sunday and unbearable to be around the other six days.

We could call living our faith daily: "Eucharist in Action." We put the "Eucharist in action" by the way we live. One of the ways we do this is by seeing Jesus in the poor.

Earlier this week, I got a little nudge from the Holy Spirit in my prayer to give Mary Jo Copeland a call at Sharing and Caring Hands. I have a deep respect for Mary Jo, who is a living saint. She's feisty and a woman deeply in love with Christ. She puts the Eucharist in action.

I called her and said, "Mary Jo, this is Fr. Andrie from St. Therese in Deephaven." I am calling you because I got a nudge from the Holy Spirit in prayer. What do kind of things do you need?" She said, "Oh Father, I am so glad you listened to the Holy Spirit. You just made my day. Thank you!"

We need t-shirts (medium, large, and x-large), socks (all sizes), bath towels, and blankets (new or lightly used and clean). People need these basic necessities of life. I said, "I will talk to the parish and see what we can do." I would like to invite you to bring these items in by January 31. We have a large bin behind our Kiosk for you to drop them off or you can bring them into our parish office. Some volunteers and I will then bring them down to Sharing and Caring Hands.

Additionally, next weekend is pro-life weekend where we celebrate God's gift of life. Faith Formation invites you to drop off all sizes of diapers next weekend in the gathering space. These will be brought to West Metro Options for Women and ICA. I will run out and get some t-shirts and socks this weekend, but I will leave you with the getting the diapers. It is just a little two awkward for me to get diapers in my roman collar.

We have been extremely blessed by God, both naturally and supernaturally. Let's keep those connections strong – Baptism, Eucharist, and Daily Life (or Eucharist in Action). Allow God's love to flow from the Eucharist through you to others every day – in doing so, you will have nothing to fear about your eternal destiny.

Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the gift our baptism. What a gift! Stir in our hearts the great gift of the Spirit that you have given us. May the love we celebrate in the Eucharist become a reality in our daily lives. We ask this through our Lord. Amen.