

Father's Notes

September 1, 2024

During one of my previous homilies, I shared the quote from one of my seminary professors who said, regarding the sacraments: **“Matter matters.”** What did he mean? God is not a detached entity but knows that we live in a physical world. He desires to communicate on our level, so that we can know, love and appreciate Him more.

We have a sense of this in our daily relationships. Imagine for a moment trying to tell someone you care for them without action. Words, while necessary, only go so far. Actions such as a handshake, a hug, a kiss, a fistbump or some other appropriate action, convey that we care about someone. God desires to encounter us in these sacraments in a way that is physical, that expresses His care, love and grace. The sacraments are not hollow rituals, but deep encounters with God's powerful help. They connect the material to the spiritual, the physical becomes the means to receive the invisible.

This is why our response to God needs a physical aspect. Gestures such as kneeling, making the sign of the cross, making a profound bow at mass, among many others, convey this response to God's love. Sometimes the gestures can seem routine, but so can our actions of love towards those we care about. But we still do them, even when it's hard. It's no different with our God.

I invite you to think about how you express your faith physically to God. Think about the next time you attend mass. When you enter the church, are you mindful that you are encountering God in a place unlike any other? Do you greet God first before anybody else? Before entering your pew, do you remember to genuflect in acknowledgement of Jesus' presence in the tabernacle? (And of course, if mobility is an issue, a profound bow of the head will suffice.)

What are others gestures you can think of that would be appropriate to do or practice a little more slowly/reverently? I recommend speaking as a family and with those you live about how we express our love and care for God. He has first loved us and given us the gifts of the sacraments. Let us respond in turn, by our participation in the sacraments and in our gestures.

Remember: **Matter matters!**

God bless,
Fr. Ben