**Homily** **for the 20th Sunday of Ordinary Time**

*Rev. Francis D. Kim*

        When I visit another church, new or old, I notice that my eye instinctively scans the inside of the church until it hits the red candle. Suddenly, whatever the architecture or location of the parish, I know that Jesus is here! We have a red candle here.

        Let’s reflect a little about what this red candle means.

        The red candle signals the Real Presence of Christ. It is not an emotional or symbolic presence, not even a spiritual presence, but a real presence. When we leave church today, the red candle continues to burn because the Real Presence of Christ remains even when nobody is here.

        During the fresh days of spring, with the juice of new life everywhere, the red candle burns because He is here. During the months of summer when we travel to so many places, the red candle burns because He is here. During the glorious last hurrah of autumn, the red candle burns because He is here. During the cold and trying days of winter, the red candle burns because He is here.

        When we are young, He is here; when we are in our young adulthood, He is here. When we are in our adult years and then our senior years, He is here. The Lord truly abides with us in all the seasons of life. That is one meaning of the red candle.

        A second meaning of the red candle is that the Lord is here as food. What an immensely loving, simple and powerful way to come to His people as food, as the Eucharist to be received!

        When we see that red candle, it also reminds us of the sacrificial love of Christ Who comes to us in such a simple but significant way. Whether we are rich or poor, young or old, He comes to us as food.

        There is no discrimination here. The Lord does not look at our background, education or politics. He looks only at our heart and the Risen Christ lowers Himself to come to us as food. Can we show even an ounce of that same kind of love for others as Jesus shows for us?

        That is a second meaning of that red candle: the sacrificial love of Christ Who comes to us in such a humble way. That red candle is both a reminder of Christ’s kind of love and a call to us to love each other the same way.

        A third meaning of that red candle is that Jesus is always accessible. We can come here before the Lord at any time. Sometimes, we come like Jacob, wrestling with the Lord; sometimes, we come like Elijah to discern His presence in the whispers of life; sometimes, we come like Joshua to do battle for our soul or the soul of another.

        Here, we can bring all the aches and pains, needs and yearnings of our wounded world. Here, we can receive the healing balm of His grace.

        To come before the Lord in the Eucharist is to come to the same place where missionaries throughout the centuries prayed for strength. It is where the great religious orders were born.

        It is where popes and bishops have sought inspiration, where kings and emperors have come for wisdom, where monks and religious have received courage, where the sick have found inner healing, where parents have prayed, where widows have sought comfort, where young people prayed for a date, where many business people prayed stop to begin their day, where people throughout the world come with every prayer, every petition, every need ever known to the human heart, where people who were spiritually lost have found their way.

        To come before the Eucharist is to come to our place at Wisdom’s table. It is where we can come, as St. Paul writes in the second reading, to understand the will of the Lord. It is to come to the place we can always call home.

        These are some meanings of that red candle: Christ’s presence; His sacrificial love; His accessibility. The red candle is the guarantee that you and I are never alone.

        Today, John’s Gospel reminds us again Jesus is the living bread that came down from heaven. And, He is with us now right here!