

FATHER CAFFAREL, A COMPANION ON OUR PATH TOWARDS GOD
“BUT LOVE IS MY ESSENCE !”

DAY 3

Two Sacraments, a single Vocation: Love
“Priests and Couples together on the Path to Holiness”

Our Two Sacraments

The law of incarnation has not expired, which led the Son of God to reach men by human means, to take on a body so that it could be seen, heard and touched. To achieve the goal we have just spoken of: the building up of the Mystical Body, Christ's action uses a means that He has chosen from among all others: the priest— or more exactly the priestly body, from the Pope to the most humble, suburban vicar. It is to this priestly body that Christ communicates his sanctifying power, with a vital communication that is forever up-to-date. [...]

Do not translate this to mean that Christ gives power of attorney to his priests to sanctify us. Like a man who goes on a trip gives power of attorney, that is, the power to act in his place, to a subordinate. Once again, Christ is not absent, but the very one who is Present. It is He who acts, but *through* the priestly body. It is He who teaches his Church, but through the Magisterium; it is He who directs, but through the hierarchy: it is He Himself who communicates his life to his members, but through his priests and the sacraments. Notice the small preposition "through." It is through his hand that the artist's inner vision becomes a statue or a painting. It is through the priesthood that the life of Christ passes through the members of his Mystical Body. The priesthood is therefore like an instrument, a free and living organ, which Christ uses to accomplish his work of redemption.

When I ask you to understand the greatness of our sacrament, it is all this that I invite you to understand and believe. This priest who forgives you in the sacrament of penance, who announces the Word of God, who blesses, do you believe, yes or no, that through him it is an *current action of the ever-living* Christ that reaches you? "It will be made according to your faith." And I know very well that appearances are deceptive: our faults, physical and moral, veil the mystery perhaps even more than the appearances of bread and wine, water or oil. But do not forget that the virtue of Christ formerly passed through the fringe of his mantle to heal the woman who was bleeding, through a little mud to open the eyes of the man born blind to light. Do you believe that we ourselves are not obliged to resort to these facts to dare to believe in our mysterious powers? Better yet, to hold on to our Master's formal promise, "Whoever listens to you listens to me. "[...]

What could not be expected of your generation if, having discovered the riches of the sacrament of Marriage, they also discovered the riches of the sacrament of Holy Orders; these two sacraments on which the growth of the Body of Christ rests.

Father Henri Caffarel
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