

I've been ordained a priest now for only 11 months.

Prior to that, I spent a year in a parish just outside Saginaw, nine months of it as a deacon. And my mom was very apprehensive about how it was going to go. I would tell her how they had welcomed me, first as a seminarian, and then as a deacon. But she was skeptical.

Yet on the day of my first Mass, she finally got to see it for herself.

At the banquet after my first Mass, she walked up to the microphone ... which is VERY uncharacteristic for her ... and spoke to the crowd. She said how she was worried about her son going someplace where he didn't know anybody and how she was concerned about things.

Pretty normal for a mom. But that she had seen how they welcomed me, and that now she understood all that I had told her about my time there.

And in the five months that I've been at St. Joseph's — my parents have been up here a few times.

And I know that I feel, and I'm pretty sure they've seen ... how we're all one big family here.

In the natural order of things, a man and a woman will most likely get married, and after a time, they are expecting ... a baby ... and soon the baby is born, and they begin their family.

The child grows up, going through various stages — infant, toddler, child, adolescent, young adult, adult ... so that after several years, the cycle repeats.

In the supernatural order of things, a person is born into water and the Holy Spirit through the Sacrament of Baptism. Sometimes as an infant ... or two ... like this Saturday at the 5:00 Mass. And other times, as an adult at the Easter Vigil ... whenever it happens ... through Baptism, we are brought into the Family of God ... to share in the Divine Life of the Trinity ... or as the book of Acts calls it in today's first reading: "the doorway

The marriage here, is Jesus Christ and His Church. And *WE* are the children of that marriage.

As we grow in our Faith, we receive additional Sacraments — Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

And where Baptism conforms us to be members of the Family of God ... Confirmation conforms us to become fisher's of men - so to speak - to go out and spread the Good News ... the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ ... this is OUR mission ... to bring others to Jesus Christ.

And then, so that we may remain energized by the graces we need, we receive - as well - the Sacrament of Holy Communion — like several of our Second Graders will do for the first time at the 10:30 Mass on Sunday.

And while many of our parishioners are related by blood ... you can look around, and see who's who ... All of us in this place are related by our sharing in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ - which we receive in Holy Eucharist. In the natural order, blood relations resemble each other physically.

In the supernatural order ... those of us nourished by ... who share the Body and Blood of Christ ... resemble each other spiritually ... in the way that we love one another like we heard in the Gospel.

And for those of you who were here before Mass to hear Dr. Geeta Yeruva speak on the mission work she shares with her husband Tom Chitta — or for the students in our school who experienced a wonderful presentation on Friday ... or if you stay after Mass to watch the video downstairs ...

We don't resemble each other physically ... we who are Americans of German or Irish descent look different than our brothers and sisters in Christ who are from India or Africa or Asia ... yet our sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ gives us the same SPIRITUAL resemblance to our God and Father, and His Son Jesus Christ ... in the love that we share as members of the Universal Church..

And so, this weekend ... we will welcome two new members into the Body of Christ - the Family of God ... we will fully initiate the Second Grade students as Catholic Christians ... and we will do our share to spread the Gospel to the ends of the world.

As we prepare to approach this altar ... to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ... let us pray for a deeper understanding of our relationship to each other — not just the natural relations ... but the supernatural relations ... that we may better comprehend our role as member of the family of God ... Sons and daughters of God the Father, redeemed in the Blood of Jesus Christ, and sent forth with the power of the Holy Spirit.