

Good afternoon and welcome to the February First Saturday Mass, sponsored by the World Apostolate of Fatima, and hosted here at Holy Family Church.

I want to express our gratitude to Deacon Roger Pashionek and the parish of Holy Family for their generosity in continuing to host our monthly First Saturday Mass. I also want to thank the priests who are in the Sanctuary concelebrating the Liturgy: Fr. ... ; as well as Fr. ... who was in the back hearing confessions.

What is the point of what we do here? I would like to address this from three distinct perspectives.

The first being, how does one make the First Saturdays?

This is, to some extent, the easy part. The first element of the First Saturday Devotion is for a person to go to Confession. That is why there were N priests here this morning from 11:00 am hearing confessions.

The premise of going to Confession is that within the context of that Sacrament to confess all of your known mortal sins, and the number of times you committed them since your last good confession. With so much psychology invading our consciousness, this is sometimes a very difficult aspect. Confessing ones sins means accusing oneself of the sins we have committed, and being as accurate as possible with the occurrences of these sins. In our day-and-age, we tend to have the almost automatic reflex of attempting to justify ourselves and to somehow indicate that it's not really our fault. However, this is not the spirit of the Sacrament. Rather, it takes a great deal of humility to recognize that we have sinned, and that we have done it a number of times. Going into excruciating details about why you think you sinned, or trying to absolve yourself of responsibility for your sins is in itself a type of pride. The bottom line is that we are human. And we sin. The best way to confess our sins is to enumerate them and state how many times we committed them. No further stories or excuses are needed.

The second element of the First Saturday Devotion is to receive Holy Communion. That is why we celebrate Mass on First Saturday. While we could probably achieve the necessity of receiving Holy Communion

by distributing the Eucharist outside of Mass - it is far better for us to unite in the context of this great prayer-of-prayers and to avail ourselves of the infinite graces that flow from the altar during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

I hope that I am preaching to the choir - but I feel the need to state that this is NOT a Sunday Mass. There are two Sunday Masses here at Holy Family. If you are looking to fulfill your Sunday obligation, it will not be fulfilled at this Mass.

The third element of the First Saturday Devotion is to recite five decades of the Rosary. We did this as well before Mass. It is important to engage the prayers and to reflect on the Mysteries of the Rosary when praying it. However, when we pray en-masse like we do at these events, one can often get lost in the recitation. I would encourage you to do your best to engage the prayers and to reflect on the Mysteries.

The fourth and last element of the First Saturday Devotion is to meditate for 15 minutes on the Mysteries of the Rosary. While this can be done while praying the Rosary, it is important for us to realize that Our Lady has made this a separate request. We shouldn't be so concerned with killing two birds with one stone - or getting a two-for-one offer. Rather, once we have left this place, I encourage you to reflect prayerfully for at least 15 minutes on the beautiful Mysteries of the Rosary. Mental prayer is often neglected in our daily practice; and it is important that we not forget about this.

The execution of these four elements of the First Saturday Devotion is the easy part. One can easily make the Five First Saturdays, as Our Lady requested, through this event over the course of five months. The prospect of doing something is always easier than effecting true spiritual conversion. And we must aspire to truly change our hearts so that we might unite them with the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

All of the things we do in connection to this devotion must be done with a singular intention of consoling the Immaculate Heart of Mary ... of offering these actions in reparation for the ingratitude and blasphemies of unrepentant sinners. And, in keeping with Our Lady's messages at

Fatima, we must also unite our hearts with hers, and desire peace in the world.

In regards to the blasphemies and offenses of unrepentant sinners, in a vision in May of 1930, Our Lord explained this somewhat to Sister Lucia. In that vision, He enumerated five specific offenses and blasphemies. Namely,

Those against Our Lady's Immaculate Conception

Those against Our Lady's perpetual virginity

Those against Our Lady's Divine maternity

Those committed by indifference, scorn, or hatred for Our Lady

Those committed directly by insulting Our Lady

Finally, in repeated visions to Sister Lucia by Our Lord and Our Lady, their promises attached to keeping the Five First Saturdays are (1) the salvation of our own soul, (2) salvation of sinners, and (3) peace in the world.

The foundation of all of this can be found in allowing the graces which flow from Our Lord's sacrifice on Calvary ... re-presented today at this altar in an un-bloody way ... to flow through the hands of Our Lady ... and truly ... really ... change us. This is the meaning of repentance ... this is the meaning of reparation. When we humbly allow God to be God and let Him transform us through the means of grace which He has provided so generously. That is the beginning of the Triumph of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart. The beginning of the Triumph happens inside of us ... right here ... when we allow God's grace to operate powerfully in us and change our hearts, and our minds, and our souls. So that our hearts, minds, and souls are in-tune with the Most Holy Trinity.

That is the key to understanding the messages of Our Lady at Fatima. That is the key to achieving the Triumph of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart. Living every moment of every day through, with, and in the Will of the Most Holy Trinity.

Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us.