

Homily
Friday of the 23rd Week in Ordinary Time
September 6, 2024

I am a creature of habit. Can anyone relate? It's not that I'm against learning new things, but what has worked for me in the past is good enough for now. And this sometimes prevents me from learning newer and better ways. Has anyone heard about the mother who was teaching her young daughter how to prepare a ham in the oven? The mother instructed her daughter to cut the end off the ham before placing it in the pan. Her daughter asked her why cut the end off. The mother said, "I don't know. That's how my mother taught me." So they called grandma, who said, "I don't know. That's how my mother taught me." So they called her great grandma, who was living quietly in her retirement home, who said, "because my pan was too small for a whole ham." Why do we do the things we do?

The Pharisees were creatures of habit. They didn't understand why Jesus and His disciples didn't fast. They didn't understand that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. They didn't understand that Jesus makes all things new. He uses new wine and old wine to explain the New Covenant compared to the Old Covenant. Today, we have new wine, the New Covenant. But are our hearts fully engaged in Jesus, the New Covenant? Do we truly believe and behave as if we have the Bridegroom with us?

Jesus is the new wine. Jesus is our joy. Jesus is our salvation. Everyday, we have the opportunity to begin anew. Just like the new wine, just like the New Testament, Jesus makes everything new. Through the Sacraments, we are reborn. We are born again in Baptism. We are healed and made whole again in Reconciliation. We are nourished and strengthened in the Eucharist. In all the Sacraments, we continually receive the graces we need to move forward. That is what being new is all about, moving forward, striving to improve, heading for that goal, maintaining our efforts on the narrow path.

We strive each day to fill our hearts with the holy things of God and to remove whatever keeps us from God's love. We ask that God help us to turn from evil, trust in the Lord, and do good. God is our everything and Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise. And we take that promise, keep our focus on God until we see Him face to Face in that glorious kingdom.