

## Homily -- 25th Sunday OT; B-cycle ... Catechetical Sunday

I remember the movie, "*Indiana Jones, and the Last Crusade.*"

In this movie Indiana Jones, embarks on an adventure to find his missing father, played by Sean Connery, who was himself trying to find the Holy Grail, the chalice Christ used at the Last Supper.

When they find where the grail is hid, they also find hundreds of different chalices, any one of which could be the real grail.

A six hundred year old knight that protects the grail, says to them, "Choose wisely, for as drinking from the cup of Christ will bring eternal life, so drinking from a false grail will bring eternal death."

Today is Catechetical Sunday, when we address the importance of teaching and learning about the Catholic faith, and we can all stand to learn more about the faith.

I am no exception. The 1983 code of canon law states that upon completion of seminary training, the education of a cleric is not finished, but is expected to continue throughout the cleric's life. So we're all in this together.

It is time for us to do some reading. It is time for us to do some studying.

By the time a Jewish boy reaches the age of his Bar-Mizpha, he has to have passages of the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament, memorized *in Hebrew!*

Evangelicals have their children memorizing key passages of Saint Paul's letters and the gospels!

We'd be hard pressed to find many Catholic adults that have even read St. Paul.

This has got to stop. We've got to start taking some initiative to learn more about our Catholic faith, and there's lots of ways we can do that. I already mentioned reading.

There's an absolute wealth of Catholic reading out there.

Our diocesan newspaper, *The Rhode Island Catholic*, is a good basic source for finding out what's happening in the Catholic scene around the diocese.

There's also *Our Sunday Visitor*, *Crisis Magazine*, and *Catholic World Report*.

How about picking up the bible, and reading for twenty minutes a day?

You don't have to read it cover to cover. You don't even have to read it in order. Thumb through it and stop at what looks interesting.

How about the Catechism of the Catholic Church?

Along with the Bible, every home should have a copy of the Catechism.

Bibles and the catechism are also relatively cheap to purchase.

The Catechism was by far, the crown jewel in Pope John Paul II's pontificate.

This is the first universal catechism of the Catholic Church since the council of

Trent five hundred year ago! Maybe readings not your thing, OK.

You can get these and other materials on CD's and DVD's or internet streaming.

You can lectures by Dr. Scott Hahn, a scripture scholar who teaches at Franciscan

University, or CD's of Benedict Groeschell.

What better way to spend your time driving to and from work.

How about TV? Instead of watching other stuff, watch EWTN for a while.

There's also the internet, where there's loads of Catholic web sites, and resources you can tap into to learn about the faith.

You're probably asking yourselves, why should I learn more about the faith?

First, because it's your duty, especially if you have a family.

Parents are the ordinary ministers of Catholic education. This is your ministry.

This is the commitment you made to God when you took your marriage vows.

You know how we say a priest is an ordinary minister of the Eucharist?

That means the care and administration of the Eucharist is ordinary to my

function as a priest. It's part of what makes me a priest.

But because the Church realizes that sometimes priests are left alone in relatively

large parishes, and Father might need help in giving out communion, the

Church gives permission for parishes to use extra ordinary ministers to assist the priest.

This is when you see lay people come up to help us with communion.

But they're not ordinary ministers. They're extra.

Parents are the ordinary ministers of Catholic education.

That means Catholic education is part of what you are.

It's part of what makes you a parent in a Catholic community.

We, the clergy, are the extra ordinary ministers!

It's our job to help you, but you're the ordinary ministers, and you can't teach, what you don't know.

Secondly, if you haven't noticed, secular distortions of Church teaching are on the rise.

It seems as though poor Pope Francis can't utter a sentence without the secular media distorting what he says.

"Pope Francis says abortion is not a sin anymore!" No, Pope Francis gave priests around the world the power to absolve the sin without a Bishop involved.

"Pope Francis says divorce is not a sin anymore." Well, actually, the Church didn't teach divorce was a sin in the first place.

When a couple gets divorced, the Church sees them as married, but living separately. Getting married OUTSIDE the Church, THAT'S a sin.

Whether you're divorced or not, isn't the issue. Catholics are supposed to get married in Church, before the altar, where Christ continually consummates his marriage to his bride the Church, because your marriage is supposed to be an image and model of his marriage, a marriage based on self sacrifice.

What Pope Francis DID do was call the Bishops of the world together to discuss the large number of Catholics married outside the Church, and is there anything we do to pastorally reach out to these people and get them back to Church and receiving communion again?

This is why you got to know your stuff, and keep up with what's being said out there, because there's a lot of misinformation being put forth.

Even in the entertainment media, how often have you ever seen a priest depicted in a movie or TV show in a positive light? I'm wagering not often.

Usually we're depicted as predators, hypocrites, drunks, or loveable fools.

If a priest IS depicted in a positive light, it's usually because he's bucking higher Church authority. So if he's disobedient to the Church, he's a hero.

And this goes all the way back to MASH. Remember Father Mullahey?

Of Father, how can say that? He was such a sweet, loveable, guy. True enough. But also notice he was totally ineffective as a priest. No one attended his Masses. The only time he was useful, was when he was doing errands for the doctors, getting something, or running here or there, but as a spiritual leader, no. I've known a lot of army chaplains in my time, and let me tell you, NONE of them were like Father Mullcahey.

Father Gaffney, Dominican priest, was a retired army chaplain; veteran of three wars; World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

He was also the spiritual director of the seminary I graduated from, Mount Saint Mary's in Emmitsburg MD. He always called us "his boys."

Gritty, tough as nails, no nonsense, and one of the best priests I ever knew. Mount Saint Mary's shared a campus with a coed college, and we shared a common dining hall with the college students.

The dining hall was directly across a field from the seminary, echo field.

The college campus was to the left of that. There were dozens of fields all over that campus, but where did all the college girls decide to sunbath in their little two piece bathing suits? Echo field!

Right on either side of the path we walked to the dining hall!

It was like running a gauntlet! I swear they did it purposely to taunt us!

Father Gaffney used to call it "the mine field."

In Emmitsburg, MD, September is as hot and humid as August is here.

And at lunch time, after morning classes, there'd be Father Gaffney standing at the edge of field; "Fire in the hole boys. Walk around."

And we'd have to walk around this quarter mile field in the heat to get to lunch.

THAT'S an army chaplain. But priests are depicted in this way because Catholicism flies in the face of the secular progressive agenda.

So all of us must choose. The gray areas of neutrality are rapidly disappearing.

Are we going to drink from the cup of Christ, or are we going to drink from the cup of secularism?

One gives eternal life, the other eternal death. Choose wisely.