

**Homily for the Consecration of Altars and Confirmation
Shrine of St. Rose of Lima**

**The Solemnity of *Corpus Christi*
June 10, 2012**

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Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

Reverend Fathers, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it is a great joy for me to be here at the Shrine of St. Rose of Lima for the first time and to celebrate these sacred rites for you. I am grateful for your hospitality and for the enthusiasm of your faith. Given the length of today's ceremonies, I wish to say only a few words.

As we hear today the command of the Lord Jesus to "do this in remembrance of me," it is eminently fitting that we have come today to consecrate these altars on which the Holy Sacrifice will soon be offered (I Corinthians 11:24). These altars have been signed with five crosses of Chrism in honor of the five holy wounds our Savior received in love for us on the Cross. Marked in this way, the altar becomes Christ. For this reason, whenever we gather at the altar of the Lord, we "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (I Corinthians 11:26).

Whenever we proclaim the Lord's death we become aware of our own share in his death. "Do you not know," asked Saint Paul,

“that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death” (Romans 5:3)? “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death,” says the Apostle, “so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 5:4).

This newness of life which we have received in the waters of Baptism is nourished by our reception of the Holy Eucharist, for as the Savior says, “he who eats me will live because of me” (John 6:57). Here we are reminded of the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas that baptism ordains us for the Eucharist. Having been united to the death of the Lord we must continually proclaim his death for us until he comes again.

But if we are to continually proclaim his death, we must be strengthened with the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit. For this reason I have also come today to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation, to call down the Holy Spirit to seal and strengthen the grace received at Baptism.

It was your patroness, Saint Rose of Lima, who said, “Would that mortal men might know how wonderful is divine grace, how beautiful, how precious; what riches are hidden therein, what

treasures, what joys, what delights.” From these altars we will receive that treasure hidden in the field, that pearl of great price: the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the true “bread which came down from heaven” (John 6:58). Hidden under the appearance of bread and wine, what treasures, what joys, what delights are hidden therein!

As we contemplate today the mystery of the Body and Blood of the Lord, let us seek to unite ourselves ever more fervently to his death. If we conform our lives to the mystery of the Lord’s Cross, the realization of his life in us will deepen and we will come to share in the glory of his resurrection.

May God give us this grace. Amen.