

**Homily Outline for Friday of the Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time**  
**Memorial of St. Bridget of Sweden**  
**Napa Institute**  
**July 23, 2021**

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- I. As you may know, the Catholic Bishops of the United States will be drafting a document on the meaning of the Eucharist in the life of the Church to be voted upon at our next meeting in November.
  - A. Not just about pro-abortion politicians and Holy Communion.
    1. Many Catholics do not understand or accept Church teaching on Eucharist.
    2. According to the Pew Research Center, 69% of Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, while the Gallup Poll reports that 61% of Catholics do not go to church on Sunday. The Pew Research Center also reports that 67% of Catholics say that President Biden should be allowed to receive Holy Communion, despite his aggressive pro-abortion stance and support for same-sex marriage and transgenderism, which are all clearly contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church.
    3. I do not think it is a mere coincidence that there is a close correlation of about two-thirds of Catholics for these three matters. After all, if you do not believe that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist, why bother going to church every Sunday, and what does it matter who receives Holy Communion if it is only a symbolic reminder of the Last Supper or a congenial meal of spiritual fellowship?
  - B. We do not need a national policy; we have canons 915 and 916.
  - C. Maxim: Law follows theology.
    1. St. Paul urges us to examine our conscience before receiving Holy Communion, saying that “whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Cor. 11:27-29).

2. An important aspect of this topic is the relationship between receiving the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance.
- D. Some people wonder, "Are we not all unworthy?" After all, before distributing Holy Communion, the priest shows the Host and the Chalice to the faithful and proclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb."
1. Then the people respond, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof." This response calls to mind the words that were spoken by the Roman centurion to Jesus when he begged the Lord to heal his sick servant (Matthew 8:8). But then we immediately add, "Only say the word and my soul shall be healed," again echoing the words of the centurion as he proclaimed, "Only say the word and my servant will be healed."
  2. We hear the healing word of Jesus in the prayer of absolution pronounced by a priest in the Sacrament of Penance. The Catechism of the Catholic Church repeats the two-thousand-year-old teaching of the Church, "Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to Communion" (n. 1385).
- E. How do we know if something is a grave sin? Grave sins are also called mortal sins because they are deadly to our relationship with God.
1. Examples would be the seven capital or deadly sins: pride, envy, anger, avarice, gluttony, lust, and sloth.
  2. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent.
  3. As we heard in today's first reading, grave matter is specified by the Ten Commandments, corresponding to the answer of Jesus to the rich young man: 'Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and your mother' (Mk 10:19). The gravity of sins is more or less great: murder is graver than theft. One must also take into account who is wronged: violence against parents is in itself graver than violence against a stranger" (nn. 1857-1858).
- II. The problem is that people do not accept the notion of sin today.
- A. *Whatever Became of Sin?* - written by psychiatrist Dr. Karl Menninger in 1973.

- B. Carter Snead spoke yesterday about “expressive individualism,” which rejects reason in favor of feelings and will.
- C. Dr. Tim Gray spoke this morning about how a venerable institution such as West Point Academy shrugs off on tests.

### III. What is the solution?

- A. Jesus began His public ministry by calling people to repentance: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel” (Mark 1:15).
  - 1. We must repent and ask forgiveness of our sins in order to live the Gospel message fully.
  - 2. As we heard in today’s Gospel, not everyone will be receptive to that message.
  - 3. We must till the soil of our own hearts first, and then till the soil of others’ hearts to be receptive to the Word of God.

### IV. May God give us this grace. Amen.