

Many people think the teachings of the Church are too rigid, too difficult to follow. They accuse the Church of being behind the times, intolerant, or simply wanting to take our fun away.

But what many people do not realize is that the teachings of the Church are the teachings of God. They are given to us by the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide us in all things, and that is exactly what the Spirit does. We receive that guidance through the Church because God wants to explain His teachings.

We are finite creatures. Our perspective is limited. From our narrow, earthly, limited point of view those teachings can indeed look strange or even difficult. But that is because, to God, we are children. And like children we do not yet understand everything. Like any good parent, sometimes all God can do is to tell us to wait, and trust Him, while He tries to keep temptation away from us. Even so, we are still called to obey His teachings.

All of the problems we experience today in our Church and in our society, are really problems of obedience. God has told us what to do, but in our stubbornness and hard heartedness, we refuse to obey. Like children, we want to do things our own way.

We are human, we make mistakes, but God does not. God is in charge of our lives and if we obey His teachings, everything will be alright. It is our job to obey the Creator even when we don't fully understand the whys and hows.

The apostles learned this lesson through the many miracles Jesus worked in their presence. And they had to be taught this lesson several times.

After fishing all night and catching nothing, Jesus instructs Peter to cast his net over the side of the boat. From Peter's perspective, this is silly he was just fishing in that spot and caught nothing. He doesn't understand why Jesus would ask him to do something so pointless, but he does it because the Lord asks Him to. And the catch of fish he hauls in threatens to burst his nets.

The apostles were taught this lesson again in the feeding of the 5000.

Imagine you are one of Jesus' disciples. Five thousand men, along with their wives and children, have come to hear Jesus preach, and they're getting hungry. So you go to Jesus and ask Him to send the crowd into town so they can get something to eat. And what does Jesus say? "Give them some food yourself."

You respond, "All we have are a couple of fish and a few loaves of bread, how can we feed so many?"

But Jesus gives you an instruction, you follow it and everyone is fed. You didn't need to understand the how or the why, all you needed to do was obey so that God could work a miracle. Recall Peter's words when Jesus told him to cast his net once more, "we haven't caught anything all night, but because you ask it Lord, I will do it."

All we need to do, is obey the commands of Our Lord, He will do the rest. He is in control, and He loves us more than we can possibly imagine.

God has given us incredible gifts, brilliant minds, amazing compassion, and a spark of His own creative power. What He asks in return is our obedience,

our trust, and our faith; just what He asked from the twelve, just because He is God.

With those things, He will work wonders.

One of the most famous football players in the history of the game is Hall of Fame quarterback, Roger Staubach. He won the Heisman Trophy in college. He then went on to lead the Dallas Cowboys to seven division titles and two Super Bowl victories. He was the NFL's passing champion four times and made six trips to the Pro-Bowl before being inducted into the Professional Football Hall of Fame.

When he was asked in an interview how he reached such an extraordinary level of excellence and effectiveness, he relied “By learning to obey.”

NFL quarterbacks are kind of “on the field managers.” They see how the game is going from within the game and so it is part of their job to call plays and make changes to the game plan on the fly.

But Roger Staubach’s coach, Tom Landry had other ideas. Landry, who is also in the Hall of Fame, insisted on calling all the plays.

Staubach admitted that being a quarterback who didn't call his own signals was a source of trial for him at first.

Coach Landry sent in every play. He told Roger when to pass, when to run, and only in emergency situations could the quarterback change the play.

Even though Roger considered coach Landry to have a "genius mind" when it came to football strategy, his pride made him itch to be able to run his own team.

But, he did what the coach wanted.

At first he did it reluctantly, but later he did it gladly. As he explained after he retired, "I faced up to the issue of obedience. Once I learned to obey, there was harmony, fulfillment, and victory."

God is much wiser than even a Hall of Fame football coach. And he wants us to experience His victory in life even more than we do ourselves, victory over sin, over selfishness, over frustration, over everything that holds us back from true fulfillment now and for all eternity.

All we have to do is follow in the footsteps of the Apostles' by handing over our loaves and fish.

God is active in our lives. He is asking each and every one of us to do something difficult. He may be asking us to forgive and make amends with someone who has hurt us, someone who doesn't deserve to be forgiven. He may be asking us to take a leap of faith and finally start obeying his teaching on artificial birth control or a disordered lifestyle. He may be asking us to give up a harmful addiction, or confess a sin that threatens to harm us and our families. He may be asking us to give up our whole lives for another person as a spouse or as a parent, or both. He may even ask us to give our lives completely to Him by following a vocation to the priesthood or the consecrated life.

Each one of us knows what God is asking of us. And each one of us is probably a little bit afraid to say yes.

But Jesus has given us a way to overcome that fear. He gives us Himself, body and blood, soul and divinity, in the Eucharist. The Eucharist that we receive at communion, the Eucharist that remains with us here in the tabernacle is our guaranteed source of supernatural strength and hope.

The closer we live to the Eucharist, the stronger we become. We all want to live closer to Christ. We all believe that following him is the path to true, lasting happiness.

So let's live closer to the Eucharist.

That may mean coming to receive Holy Communion during the week once or twice, or just making a brief visit each day to pray at the Tabernacle. Or even making the commitment to pray one hour a week here in our beautiful adoration chapel, which is still undergoing renovation.

This day, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, marks the beginning of a three year national Eucharistic Revival. For the next year our diocese will embark on a series of activities and events designed to share our love of the Eucharist with the world. You can learn more about these events on the diocesan website.

If you would like to get involved on a national level, I encourage you to visit the website at eucharisticrevival.org.

God has given us many gifts. He gives each one of us unique gifts and a unique calling. But above all these gifts He has given us Himself in the

Eucharist. The Eucharist is the Fruit of the Tree of Life. It will give eternal life to those who receive it in a worthy state. Let us demonstrate our worthiness, by giving God our trust, our faith, and our obedience.

“Such a duty a subject owes to their king, too little payment for so great a debt.”