

**World Youth Day Catechesis**  
**Theme Two: “Established in Jesus Christ”**  
**Bishop Frank J. Caggiano**

*Scripture Text: “Planted and built up in Jesus Christ, firm in the faith” (Col. 2:7)*

I. **Introduction:**

- A. **Thanks** for continuing your catechesis here at WYD, Madrid. As we eagerly await the arrival of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict later today
- i. Remember, as **pilgrims** we pray that this may be a time of great grace and blessing for each of you

II. As you know, Pope Benedict, has asked us to accept a **threefold grace**, the second of which is what we gather to do today:

- i. **Yesterday, we explored the gift of faith**
  1. A Divine Gift that we must accept and allow to change us, illuminate us, to guide us in life
  2. A Gift that allows us to enter into a personal, living relationship with Jesus
- ii. Today, we will explore together **the Person who lies at the heart of our faith is a person, unlike any other person:**
  1. To invite Jesus to be the foundation of our lives as we strive to seek holiness
- iii. **Tomorrow, we will be challenged by Jesus to go forth in mission:**
  1. To preach the “*Good News*” to all the world as “witnesses”
    - a. In short: **To Bring the world to know and love Jesus!**

III. **Personal Story:**

- A. It was a **warm evening in May, 1981** and I was standing in the chapel of what was then the college seminary of our Diocese, named after our Blessed Lady, under the title of the Immaculate Conception
- i. It was **graduation night** and my family and the rest of those who attended had already moved to the dining room for refreshments
  - ii. I **stayed behind** because I had some ***unfinished business with the Lord***
    1. For after much reflection, I had come to the conclusion that **priesthood was not** for me
      - a. I could have cited many reasons at the time, even some familiar in the Sacred Scripture
        - i. I am too young, I don’t have the abilities, etc.

- b. I remember distinctly telling the Lord...I will serve you in any way but not this way.... **“because I wanted to see the world”**
- B. A few months later, I landed a job as the **sales representative** for the McGraw-Hill Book Company, with the entire NY metropolitan area as my territory
- i. **My clients were a tough group:**
    - 1. One in particular: **owner** of one of the largest business schools in the city and my biggest customer
      - a. She never gave me the time of day
      - b. **In between** “good” and “morning” she inevitably slammed the **door in my face**
      - c. However, in my business, the customer was always right and so you went back for more
- C. **For 18 months** I worked but things changed over time, as I spent many a night on the road, in an empty hotel room, trying to ignore the voice of the Lord
- i. **Like a child who tugs at the dress of his/her mother** to gain her attention, the Lord was tugging at my heart, asking me
    - 1. to open my eyes and see what really mattered to me
    - 2. to spend my time in making a real difference in people’s lives
    - 3. to choose what He knew would make me truly happy
  - ii. Even though sometimes I can be deaf, soon enough even I began to **recognize his voice again**, perhaps because **I came to realize that “seeing the world” is not what it is cracked up to be**
    - 1. I decided to return to the seminary....and never looked back
  - iii. For those who are here present who may believe that the Lord may be calling you to priesthood, diaconate or religious life, please have the courage to answer His call
    - 1. He will give you the strength to do his Will and find true joy and peace in doing it.
- D. However, there was **one task left for me to do...inform my clients**
- i. With a bit of fear, I returned to my largest client and received the same warm greeting that she always gave me
    - 1. However, this time, as she was ready to slam the door, I put my **foot in the door lintel** and told her.... **I am leaving**
    - 2. For the **first time in months**, she turned to look at me, with a real NY smirk, and replied:
      - a. “I knew you could not do this job...who is dumb enough to hire you?”
      - b. My answer was simple: “Jesus Christ”

**ii. The reaction was immediate and shocking**

1. She **froze**...her face went **white**....her shoulders **drooped**...she looked so **tired** and in a **quiet voice** said to me... “Come in”
2. After calling out to her secretary to hold her calls, she and I spoke for nearly one hour...she did most of the talking...as she narrated her broken life
  - a. I sat there in shock...and awe...and humility
    - i. And for the FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, saw with my own eyes and heard with my ears the power of the Name of JESUS

**E. I asked myself: Who is this Jesus?**

- i. Who is it that can break through the hardness of any heart?
- ii. Who has inspired billions throughout the ages to live lives of love, peace and justice?
- iii. Who is it that gives us real hope? Real joy?
- iv. Who has the power to call us from every continent and land, to ask us to overcome our natural, ethnic and racial differences, to live as real brothers and sisters?
  1. **Who alone has the authority to call us here to Madrid and to ask so much**
    - a. **None other than JESUS THE CHRIST: “Who is the way, the Truth and the Life”**
- v. This morning, we will spend a few minutes remembering and celebrating what we already know about the Lord

**IV. Who is this Jesus?**

A. **In order to really appreciate who Jesus the Lord is**, we need to remember who God is

i. **Only one definition of God in all the SS: (1 John)**

1. **“God is love”...**
  - a. *We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. (1 John (NAB) 4)*
  - b. Love in this context is not an emotion or passion
    - i. It is pure, self-gift as only God can give.
2. **We know from our ordinary experience:** We know that love demands more than one person:
  - a. At the heart of Jesus’ message is the revelation that God His Father loves with a perfect, pure selfless divine love
3. **For God to be love**, then God in Himself, is more than one divine person: **God is Three in One... A BLESSED TRINITY**

- a. The Father “Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible”
  - b. The Son: only begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from light, true God from true God
  - c. And their Love is so perfect that he is **not** something but someone
    - i. Holy Spirit
4. **God is sufficient in Himself...**But God’s love is so deep, so strong, so gracious that in the fullness of time, God freely chose to create all things to share His love. ....**and in the fullness of time the Father sent His Son into our world that had become broken due to our sins, to lead us back on the path of love to Him**
- a. **As we explored yesterday, we call this mystery the Incarnation**
    - i. **We believe that the Son of God, took a human life in Jesus** and made concrete the love of God
      - 1. St. Paul: “becomes a man like us in all things but sin”
  - b. **What happened in the life of Jesus has eternal meaning:**  
In the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, we have been forgiven, redeemed and given eternal glory
5. **Question:** How does the great work of Jesus come to us?
- a. **What Jesus enjoys by nature we receive in grace through baptism**
    - i. We become sons and daughters of God as He is the one Divine Son of God
  - b. **How is this possible? Who is the “Glue” that allows us to be forgiven?**
    - i. **Answer: The presence, life and power of the Holy Spirit in you and me**
      - 1. The Spirit allows us to **share by the grace of adoption** what Jesus has by nature
      - 2. **To become children of God**

**B. Who is this Jesus Christ we believe in?**

- i. **Jesus is God made man**
  - 1. God shares in all things human except sin
    - a. **Every life is beautiful and matters**

- i. Every human being has great value, since God took a human life and he would not become junk
    - 1. Every human life is beautiful...yours and mine
      - a. The unborn baby
      - b. The elderly and sick
      - c. Those who are disabled
      - d. Those who love in the shadows of our societies
        - i. ALL BEAUTIFUL in JESUS
    - 2. Every life has a destiny: it is called to share **eternal life** in Jesus... in the glory of HEAVEN, if a person is willing to say YES to Him
  - ii. **The fact that every life is beautiful is not always easy to believe:**
    - 1. I am sure that sometimes you look at yourself and say, if I were only skinnier, taller, had better complexion, had blue, brown or green eyes, had curly, straight hair, were as muscular or toned as he or she, then the world would notice me...would value me...would love me
      - a. You look at the “beautiful people” whose lives are splashed all over the Web or movies or TV and they seem to lead a glamorous life....I would be happy if I did the same
  - iii. **Well I am here to tell you that you are beautiful just the way you are:**
    - 1. You are precious to Jesus, even with your physical defects
      - a. The next time you stand in front of the mirror, remember that Jesus is standing right next to you and whispering in your ear: You are beautiful to me!
- b. **True Success:** There will be others who will tempt you to ask the question: Will I ever succeed? Will I ever make anything of myself?
- i. They judge success as the world does:
    - 1. In terms of money, power, prestige

- ii. However, let us look at the life of Jesus to see the meaning of true success:
    - 1. Jesus was the foster son of a poor carpenter, who learned his trade from Joseph
    - 2. Jesus never traveled more than 30 miles from the place where he was born
      - a. Owned no land or possessions
      - b. Had no immediate family of his own
  - iii. Yet, we judge Jesus to be the greatest success there is, as our Lord and Savior
    - 1. Point: Success is never measured in the things you own or measure or by the standards of power that this world values
    - 2. The measure of a person is his/her character in love
  - iv. So... if those around you try to tempt you to believe that you are not worth it, that you will never become anything, that you will amount to nothing...
    - 1. Don't listen to the lies... listen to Jesus!
  - c. **Respect for our Bodies** is key, since the Word of God blessed all human bodies by taking a body Himself.
    - i. **Resurrection of the Body**: Our bodies are so important that one day we believe that we will rise from the dead with glorified bodies
      - 1. **So do nothing that will harm your body, since it is the Temple of the Holy Spirit.**
- ii. **Jesus is the Love of God, made real, up front and personal, in you and me**
- 1. How near is God to you and me?
    - a. OT: Gods' Chosen People
      - i. They dreaded to look upon the face of God in fear that they would die if they did so
      - ii. They also never uttered the name of God, so holy was His Name
    - b. NT: the Lord Jesus revealed the presence of God in Himself and continues to do right in our midst
  - 2. How?
    - a. IN **baptism**., the Holy Spirit lives in your and me
      - i. Replaced your **mortal breath with the breathe of eternal life**

1. **Ancient Church:** Baptized Adults and children in their households
    - a. “Lose their breath”...breath of life replaced by the breath of Jesus
    - b. Point: we have already died and risen with Christ
      - i. John Paul: “DO NOT BE AFRAID” we have nothing to fear
    - ii. He made us “**Temples**” of the Holy Spirit
      1. Point: You are so precious that God makes His home in you and me
        - a. Everywhere you go, Jesus comes along
    - iii. He made you **His Son and Daughter in Jesus**
      1. And He will never abandon you
    - iv. Made you a **member of His Body the Church**
      1. We are real BROTHERS AND SISTERS...**FOREVER**
  - b. **Confirmation:**
    - i. He gave you the Fullness of the Spirit (**like a glass that overflows with water**)
      1. Received the Seven fold gifts
      2. Fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal. 5:22)
3. **Our daily duty is not to ignore His presence but allow it to grow through:**
- i. the Sacraments, the Scripture and loving in each other
- iii. **Jesus is the one who forgives our sins, no matter what they may be:**
1. Greatest act of love was made manifest in the Cross
    - a. **Sin and death no longer have the final word...** Jesus’ victory does.
      - i. And He alone can set you and me free to start again
    - b. You and I have come here, perhaps hiding secrets in some deep part of our hearts, even sins
      - i. Hurts that we resent
      - ii. Sins that we committed in weakness that we are too ashamed to tell anyone
      - iii. Only Jesus can set you free....

1. In the sacrament of reconciliation, the Lord comes to you through the priest
  - a. The Lord knows them all and still loves you, calling you to seek forgiveness and courage

iv. **The Son and the Father are the Giver of the Holy Spirit is precisely the Father and the Son (Creed)**

1. After his resurrection: Jesus says: “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn. 20:22)

**2. Why do we receive the Holy Spirit?**

- a. With God’s grace, we can become EXTRAORINDARY, to BE GREAT
  - i. As we will see tomorrow, we will change the world!

- C. Finally, this Jesus asks to enjoy a **living, breathing, personal relationship** with you and me ...or as the great saints have described it...to establish a **friendship** that will never end

**i. True Friend:**

1. A true friend is not an acquaintance or someone to hang out with

**2. True friend:**

- a. Book of Proverbs: “A true friend is a sturdy shelter, he who finds one, finds a treasure”
- b. Jesus: (Jn. 15:13) “There is no greater love than this, to lay down your life for your friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.”

**3. True friendship demand three things:**

- a. First: Respond to the invitation
- b. Second: To Trust and have confidence
- c. Third: To learn from their words and example

**ii. Our task this WYD: TO RENEW OUR FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS**

1. Respond to His Invitation:

- a. To Meet Him in the Sacraments
  - i. Eucharist
  - ii. Penance/Reconciliation
- b. To spend time with Him reading the Scriptures

2. To learn to trust his Love

- a. One of the most important lessons in all Christian life= “What counts is not the fulfillment of my desires but of His will”



3. To live our His words and example
  - a. Another way to say this is to seek holiness of life
    - i. Holiness is the fullness of life in Christ
    - ii. This is the topic that we will explore together tomorrow

**V. For as long as I live, I will never forget that fateful afternoon,**

- A. For I saw what is possible in the name of Jesus
  - i. Harden hearts can be healed
  - ii. Anger can be calmed
  - iii. Doubts can be strengthened
  - iv. Hurts can be tended
  - v. Sins are forgiven and a new start given to anyone who wants it
  - vi. The world as we know it has no choice but to stop and take notice
- B. That name has been given to you and me in faith...A name above all other names... So that His name, every knee must bend and every tongue confess to the Glory of God that Jesus Christ is our Lord.
  - i. Thank you and God bless you always!