Faith Formation Files: Vol. 1, Issue 14 January 13, 2019

My husband, Kory, and I went to Yellowstone National Park for our honeymoon. We planned to return on our 10-year anniversary and were lucky enough to do so. Yellowstone is a magnet for my soul. I feel such awe and peace when I marvel at all of God’s creation on display there. There are so many unexplainably beautiful, natural phenomena such as waterfalls, hot springs, and mud pots. There are fields and mountains, lakes and rivers, canyons, and petrified wood. The diversity of wildlife is unparalleled. There are bison, moose, bear, eagles, and wolves, just to name a few. But the pinnacle features are the geysers, and the most famous is Old Faithful. Among the many fumaroles and steam vents of Upper Geyser Basin, Old Faithful is neither the largest or tallest geyser, but it is the most reliable. Some might even describe it as “miraculous” that over the past 150 years and over 1,000,000 recorded eruptions, Old Faithful’s predictability has a margin of error of only about 10 minutes.

Those same people may also describe the consecration of the Eucharist as a “miracle.” Too often, perhaps due to our simple human capabilities, the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into Jesus’ real body and blood is characterized as a “hidden miracle,” something we believe even though we can not see it. The bread does not miraculously change into flesh, as of muscle. The wine does not miraculously change into the viscous liquid that flows through the veins of all living animals. If they did, then a miracle would have truly happened. Miracles are when we can actually see a change happen: Lazarus raised from the dead, a cripple being able to walk, a consecrated host that bleeds, a statue of the Virgin Mary that cries real tears. The transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the real (not symbolic) body and blood of Christ is so much more than a plain, old miracle! The underlying reality of what the bread and wine is is what changes. Once consecrated, their simple appearance embodies the soul and divinity of Christ. Can you even fathom how magnificent the visual revelation of Christ would be??!? No wonder He choose bread to house Himself. We wouldn’t be able to handle His presence in any other form!

The important thing to remember when participating in Holy Communion is that it’s not about the what (the bread and wine) but rather, the who. It is Jesus Christ, Our Lord. If you think of the Eucharist as a miracle, you leave behind the theology of the sacrament. You don’t have a way of understanding why the Eucharist is the sacraments of sacraments. Why would all ecclesial life be oriented to the Eucharist if it were just a miracle that happened with predictable regularity, like Old Faithful? The transubstantiation is also known as The Paschal Mystery. The change is difficult, if not impossible, to understand. That is why it is a mystery. However, it is a mystery not to solve, but simply one in which to engage. Come to class to participate in the explanation and discussion regarding this all important mystery and gift of our faith.

 Blessings,

 Julie Gould

This Week: faithformation@ctknsf.org

* Sunday, Jan. 13, 4-6 pm at Fellowship Hall
* Monday, Jan. 14, 7 pm at Fellowship Hall: Adult Enrichment Class