Faith Formation Files: Vol. 1, Issue 15 January 20, 2019

My husband, Kory, has been a life-long fan of the Pittsburgh Steelers. He recalls watching them from his childhood. Their focus on defense became a formative force in his life. He played on the D-line when he was in high school. He went on to coach youth football for almost 20 years, namely as the defensive coach for the 8th grade team. A highlight of his life was when I gave him tickets to a Steelers game for his 50th birthday. We took a weekend, drove down to Pittsburgh, and watched them defeat Detroit at Heinz Field. Memories of that trip include touring the area around the stadium, eating at Jerome Bettis Grille 36, and becoming friends with some amazing season ticket holders who invited us to tailgate with them and other friends of the Steeler Nation. With full bellies and warm hearts, we watched an exciting game that lives on in our memories. NFL football is unquestionably the most incredible spectator sport. But that’s football. Mass is NOT a spectator sport!

We do not attend Mass to watch an event. The consecration during the Liturgy of the Eucharist is not a spectacle to observe from the comfort of your pew. If it were, why aren’t we tailgating in the parking lot before Mass? (I’ll bring the potato salad!) Why don’t people bring signs to display throughout the service? (Can you imagine someone holding up a poster that says, “Fear the Beard!”?) Why don’t we give Father a Gatorade shower after a particularly “hits home” homily? (Although this might inspire a few more people to attend.)

Through the Holy Eucharist, Christ’s sacrifice of His life is made present. Mass is not just a reenactment of the Last Supper. It is the re-presenting of His sacrifice. It is the making present today of the ongoing surrender by God of His only son, the continuous ransom payment by Jesus for our sins, the still-happening commemoration of God incarnate (made human in all ways except sin) given for us. Jesus came to show us how to live and to be the Lamb of God, the perfect sacrifice to atone for the breaking of the original communion we had with God which was done by Adam and Eve. Jesus came to earth to die on our behalf because God, the Father, loves us that much! Mass is our opportunity (not just an obligation) to relive this ultimate gift, to praise God, to join with the rest of the body of Christ throughout the world, and to partake in the Holy Eucharist so that we can be most in union, in right relationship, with God. Our participation gives us His grace, a share of the Divine Life. It absolves us of venial sin and gives us strength to prevent future sin. The Eucharist was given for our chance at eternal life. And as for me, that’s better than any souvenir I could buy at the stadium.

Blessings,

Julie Gould

This Week: faithformation@ctknsf.org

* Sunday, Jan. 20, 4-6 pm at Fellowship Hall
* Monday, Jan. 21, 7 pm at Fellowship Hall: Adult Enrichment Class
* Wednesday, Jan. 23, 5:30 pm at Fellowship Hall: A Family of Faith potluck and follow-up meeting. Please bring your books and a dish to pass.