

Espoused to Jesus



The Sisters of Life hold their final professions on the feast of [Transfiguration](#). This year, it fell on a Friday, normally a penitential day. The Mass at St. Patrick's [Cathedral](#), however, was a glorious festival of radiant joy and thanksgiving, so much so that I didn't want to leave Fifth Avenue. I didn't want the Mass to ever end. Everyone was focused on Jesus Christ, all as members of his bride, the Church. It was the same resplendence that is present at every Mass, but here everyone seemed rapt. There were no distractions. There was nothing routine about any of it.

I eventually apologized to one of the guards who asked us to take our reunion conversations outside of the Church as the noon Mass was starting (the profession Mass began at 9:30).

He replied that no apologies were necessary: "Believe me, we're all so happy, too." We need Jesus, and we need community focused on him, convinced that Jesus is real and hope in him is not a fairy tale.

The reality of the love of Jesus as the divine person was unmistakable unless consecrated women are all under one mass delusion. So many things contributed to the power of the morning as the joy could not be contained on Aug. 6 – but one was how much [Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan](#), the archbishop of New York, who presided, seemed to need it as much as anyone.

This has been a hard time. Sometimes I wonder if the coronavirus pandemic is the least of them. But it sure has exacerbated problems already present. I think of our false sense of security. I had two friends die of things other than [coronavirus last year](#). There's no vaccine to keep us from death or prepare us for meeting our Maker.

The solution to that is the [sacraments](#)! The sacraments! The sacraments! Which, of course, were unavailable to many of us – including religious sisters and other consecrated women in some places. After the shutdowns, and in the midst of continuing unveiling of evil in the Church and the world, we needed to rejoice together about women who have encountered the Lord in the most intimate ways. They know he is no delusion, because he has revealed himself to them through his word and providential care.

In his preaching, Cardinal Dolan focused on the reality of the nuptial nature of the day: “There are veils. There are rings. There are vows. There is walking up the aisle. There are family and friends. There is a wedding party – namely, the other sisters of their community. Because it’s a nuptial event. These women are brides. They are about to become wives and spouses.

They behold Jesus in a new and stunning way, transfigured as their eternal Bridegroom.”

After the prayers and [vows](#) made their status official, Cardinal Dolan greeted each of the new fully professed sisters with “Happy wedding day!”

No one was going to walk away from Mass not knowing that Jesus Christ calls women to be espoused to him.

It’s a remarkable grace and testimony to what we are all called to, whatever [our vocation](#): union with God. Brides of Christ give up the good of marriage and family for families and priests.

And for the Sisters of Life, that fourth vow, “to protect and enhance the sacredness of human life,” is a desperately needed gift to a world that seems to have no idea how precious a gift human life is. They are not just espoused to Jesus, but spiritual mothers to a brutal and cruel culture of death.

The Sisters of Life show us a way out of it: being in love with Love himself and loving every person we encounter with the heart of Jesus. We – even a sister – will do it imperfectly. But it's a marvel to behold when Christ uses us as tenderness in the midst of the darkness.

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