

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sunday, November 19, 2006
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Good Morning! Today, we are in the middle of November, and we slowly start winding down the Church year – the Church year ends in a couple of weeks on the Feast of Christ the King. And so, what the Church does at this time of the year is it helps us to look at the very end of our lives – the end of time, huh? And it talks about the end of the world, when Christ will come again, that’s what we end with Christ the King on. But the month of November and this whole time is the time where we focus on the end of the world, and the end of the world for all of us is when? When we drop dead – your world just ended! That was it, ok, so...all of us prepare for that reality. And it is most appropriate today that as we prepare for this, we have two baptisms, because what baptism does is that it helps us to remember that even from the moment of our birth – that what is most important isn’t the world and what is passing away, but Jesus Christ. And so, these two children, Eliot and Isabella, will come and get baptized into Christ today. And as they get baptized into Christ, we talk about the second reading today, it talks about when Christ died, He died for all, and what He did, He did for all of us so that we can live forever. So, what happens is when Isabella and Eliot get baptized today, what Jesus Christ did 2,000 years ago on the cross, they are covered in His blood, so that they will live forever. That’s what we believe! And if you listen to the gospel, Jesus tells us “Heaven and Earth will pass away...” Everything is going to pass away! This church is going to pass away, you are going to pass away, I’m going to pass away - everything that we fight over – it’s all going to pass away! That the only thing that won’t pass away, according to Jesus is “heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” And so what that means is if you and I come, and we stay focused on Jesus, then we shall never pass away. Eliot and Isabella, if they stay focused on Jesus all the days of their life, they will live forever. And that all begins today. It helps us to put into perspective what really matters! You know, so many people focus on making money, you know “oh, I have to make money...” and it is all going to pass away! I don’t care if you become a multi-multi-multi-millionaire! I was up in Brighton, Michigan a couple of nights ago, and I spoke to a bunch of men. And I told them “I don’t care if you are multi-multi-millionaires” and some of them are – “you are not going to take it with you when you drop dead – sorry, you focused on the wrong thing!” Can you imagine, focusing your whole life on just being powerful and making money and being rich and taking care of number one, and then one day, when you take your last breath and you drop dead, and you focused on the wrong thing – you messed up everything because you focused on those things that are passing instead of that which will never pass away! So, the reality is for us, is who or what do we focus on? Are we focusing on the world, or do we focus on Jesus Christ? Do we focus on Jesus when we go to work, or do we focus on making money or taking care of ourselves? Even if we take care of our body, huh, so I can have ripples in my stomach, remember? One of my kids at Prep used to talk about his “six-pack.” And I’d say “I gotta case, what are you talking about?” You know, but he would sit there and focus on that - “I gotta take care of my body!” “That’s great, but you know what son? You’re gonna drop dead – you’re a football player – when your 50. And when you drop dead at 50, they’re going to dig a hole six feet deep – they’re going to throw you in that hole and cover you with dirt, and

everyone is going to go home and eat potato salad, huh?" I've been to a lot of funerals in my life, and never once did I hear "did you ever see the ripples in that guy's stomach?" Never once! Why? Because these ripples now are lunchmeat for the worms – a munch, a munch, a munch! And we put all this time and energy into the things that are passing, and yet eternal life, the thing that never passes – we throw it a bone once in awhile, you know, we think God is Barney, you know "I love you, you love me..." You know, to win a state championship football game, like Prep guys used to do, they would have to sit there and work out four hours every day, throwing a football; to win a soccer game, they would have to kick the thing four hours a day – just to win something that is passing! When I was at Prep 10 years ago, we became State Champion football players, right? State Champions! When we beat Central Bucks West everybody went nuts! They were the crap in those days, huh? "Hey, I'm a State Champion Football player...yea, yea, yea." Those kids are already has-beens, correct? They've already graduated from college. When they are my age, they'll tell their sons "when I was your age, son, I was a State Champion football player." And the kids will say "shut up dad, you're just fat and bald now – nobody cares!" And yet, four hours a day, they would put in all this practice and then it's gone! And then our soul, we give the least amount of time to. You know, if a kid told me he wanted to be a State Champion football player, and I said "what are you going to do to prove that to me," and they'd say "well, we are going to go to practice once a week, about 45 minutes to an hour, depending on who the coach is, and we are going to have good thoughts about the game," I'd say "INNNNNNK – wrong answer, gentlemen!" I ask you "do you want to go to heaven..." that's what the gospel is about, "yes, Father!" What are you doing to prove to me that you want to go to heaven? "Well, we go to Mass every week, when we feel like it, when there is not a good game on or nothing on TV...when we feel like it, we'll go to church about 45 minutes to an hour, and we'll try to be good people." "INNNNNNK!" Do you mean to tell me it is easier to get to heaven than it is to win a State Champion Football game? Do you think God is a fool? "Oh, yea, to win a State Championship and make money, you are going to have to work 40 hours a week, work hard, work hard, work out every day to be healthy..." but to get to heaven – the greatest of all goals – "oh, please, oh please, could you just try to come to Mass every once in awhile, and could you just try to be a good person, and if you just try, then I'll be just like Barney, and I'll let you come on in... I'm a fool!" I'm here to tell you, God is not a fool. That if you have to put time and energy on this earth just to win things that are passing, how much more for our eternal salvation? How much more? We are still saved by grace, absolutely! But you have to receive grace! You have that gift – but if you don't work with that gift – if you don't workout, then you are not going to be a good player! God gives you the gift of salvation – the pure grace! You have to accept it and you have to work with it. You have to now take that gift He has given you and do your best with it. That is what Jesus is saying today. "Heaven and earth will pass away – take a look! Everything is going to be gone, but my words will never pass away." And what must happen is we stay focused on Jesus every day of our lives. And if you do that, then you are going to be able to deal with anything, huh? If you listen to the song – I hope they are going to play it, they played it at every other Mass – "Do not be afraid, I am with you..." You can face life and all these other things that are passing by yourself and be afraid – a lot of people are afraid every day – "I wonder what's going to happen tomorrow..." But if you face it with Jesus Christ, you don't have to be afraid of anything.

You don't have to be afraid of dying; you don't have to be afraid of anything. And again, I love to tell the story of Sister Christine, the Carmelite, who seven years ago she was told "Sister," when she went to the doctor "I'm sorry to tell you this, but you are going to die." And Sister started to smile. And he said "Sister, I don't think you understand, you have about one month to live, you have inoperable cancer..." And Sister smiled all the more and she said "Doctor, oh I understand – I don't think you understand. Doctor, either way I win. If I live, I am with Jesus, if I die, I am with Jesus. Either way, I'm with Jesus." Is that the way you live? That you focus so much on Jesus that either way you win, it doesn't matter? Our prayer today for Eliot and Isabella is that all the days of their lives, they know what is most important – Jesus Christ. And they keep their eyes focused on Him, so that as that happens, we pray that one day that we will have two new statues in this church – one for St. Isabella, and one for St. Eliot – I never heard of St. Eliot, he will have to be the first! And we will have these two great saints here in our church that we will have to make new statues for, because this is the place that they were baptized. And that can happen, if they just stay focused on Jesus, because "heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." So, what are you focused on? Are you focused just on earth, or are you focused on forever? May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen!