

Irresistible

In these last couple weeks of our fast, I've had the privilege of making two trips to the Northeast where I witnessed the irresistible splendor of Jesus in His Church, both evangelical and Catholic. The Spirit is stirring up His saints, girding them in truth and welling up like living water to grant the gender broken a better Word. One can have any number of freedoms and still be a slave! Jesus alone frees the sin-shackled and makes us true sons and daughters of the one Father.

In Pennsylvania, I gathered with a group of priests who meet regularly to share their sexual vulnerabilities and the healing love that sets them free; in New York City and New Jersey I gathered with turned-on Korean-Americans who are as committed to becoming whole as they are becoming good news for their LGBT+ friends. I spent most of my time in the borough of Queens where I invested in a church renowned for its efforts at creating emotionally healthy community and fostering racial reconciliation. Stunningly so! Yet the pastors have the wisdom to know the difference between ethnicity and gender identity issues; they celebrate a diversity of tribes and tongues while refusing the 'gender spectrum' ideology that fractures God's children. Mercy welled up as we testified of His unfailing love that reconciles us to our true humanity—male and female--in this one body.

Before setting off for these trips, I had the privilege of assisting at the Mass celebrating the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome. It is my favorite feast of the church year, as it is the only one that celebrates the Church herself: the irresistible splendor of Jesus revealed in His body. As I read from Ezekiel 47 about the water levels rising in the temple until the saints are immersed and flowing out into the world in order to heal and feed the broken ('their fruit shall serve for food and their leaves for medicine', EZ 47: 12), I realized that this is our mission. It is being fulfilled as we gather and lift up Jesus as Healer!

In all of our Northeast gatherings, I fielded questions from countless saints who face increasingly complex hardships due to LGBT+ demands: the deacon working with a nominal Christian family whose 4-year-old daughter showed up in Sunday School as a boy, the assistant male youth leader who announced his 'transition' to womanhood, the influential minister now 'gay married' and adopting children while extolling the joys of 'gay Christianity', the worker whose 'gay' boss firmly encourages his employees to stick rainbow emblems on their office doors, and many who simply want to know how to care for loved ones who now live under the rainbow. As we prayed at every meeting for Jesus to come and show us His way--the mercy that is ours only as we enter through the gate of His body and blood shed for us in the one body--the water levels rose and immersed us in the divine love that breaks human enslavement. We bring a better Word endowed with power to save the gender broken. His love radiant in humbled, poured-out saints: Irresistible.