

We are very fortunate here in Wisconsin to have so many lakes and rivers around us. This recreational water of course leads to a good number of people investing in boats and other water crafts. Just go to Newville on any summer weekend and you will understand my point. This thought about boats brings to mind an old saying about the Catholics that make up our church.

It has been said that there are three kinds of Catholics: Tugboats Catholics, sailboat Catholics, and raft Catholics.

Tugboat Catholics are the most favorable of the three.

These believers put their faith in God rain or shine.

Whether the wind is with them or not, these believers just plow right along confident in the way of their Master.

These are the faithful who go to Mass not because they have to but because they want to. They heed the words of

Jesus spoken in the upper room when he gathered his

disciples around the table, gave them his Body and Blood and said, “Do this in remembrance of me.” These are the people who will have no problem getting through the narrow gate.

Sailboat Catholics are believers who move confidently with Christ when the winds and the tide are moving with them. But if the winds of change and adversity begin to blow, these followers surrender to the chaos and the meandering currents and as a result they drift away from their God. These individuals will go to Mass when they go with their family or friends but left to their own resources they will often find other things to occupy their time. It is easy to be lured away by other activities and so these catholics end up aimlessly afloat when there is no strong current to drive them. These believers have no problem

following Jesus through the wide door, but if things in life get challenging, if the door they are asked to go through becomes narrow and poses a challenge; they will change their view point and wait to be moved by another current.

Finally we have the raft Catholics. These believers wear the name of Christ as an identification but they have no significant relationship with Christ. These individuals do not follow Christ, but they stay close because someone is pushing or pulling them in that direction. Their faith is superficial and their relationship with Christ is tenuous.

So there you have it: the Tugboat Catholics, The Sailboat Catholics and the Raft Catholics. The next Question I pose to you is difficult but necessary: Which one of these three are we? I offer that as a reflective question

for you this coming week. When you are stuck in traffic or you are waiting for your meal at a restaurant or your at a commercial break during your favorite show: ponder that question and see what your answer is. Maybe even bring it up at the dinner table or in the car. Which boat am I and what can I do to upgrade from a raft to a tugboat.

John Oxenham, an English poet catches the point in this verse that he wrote:

“To every person there opens a way
A high way, a middle way, and a low way.
The high souls take the high way, and the low souls take
the low way, and in between on the misty flats, the rest drift
to and fro.
But to every person there opens a way
A high way, a middle way, and a low way.
And every person decides the way that his soul will go.”