

**06/11/2023. Corpus Christi:** The Solemnity of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ.

Dt 8:2-3,14b-16a; I Cor 10:16-17 Jn 6:51-58

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, the Precious Body and Blood of Christ. It is a special feast for us because today we celebrate the fulfillment of a promise Jesus made when he said, "Behold, I am with you until the end of the age." And this is something so central to being Catholic. I'm talking about the Eucharist—the real and tangible presence of Jesus Christ with us. In today's Gospel, Jesus is speaking in the synagogue of Capernaum about his body being real food and his blood being real drink and that he who eats him and drinks his blood will live forever. Jews who listened to him were shocked. They could not accept what he was talking. Later we hear that some of his disciples left him for this was a hard teaching.

It was not only then, even now the believing communities are divided. We too may ask, how can a simple host turnout to be the body of Christ and the wine to be the blood of Christ? Here is an interesting story about a skeptic man who came to a priest and wanted to make fun of his faith, so he asked, "How can bread and wine turn into the Body and Blood of Christ?" The priest answered, "No problem. You yourself change food into your body and blood, so why can't Christ do the same?" But the objector did not give up. He asked, "But how can the entire Christ be in such a small host?" "In the same way that the vast landscape before you can fit into your little eye." But he still persisted, "How can the same Christ be present in all your churches at the same time?" The priest then took a mirror and let the man look into it. Then let the mirror fall to the ground and broke it and said to the skeptic, "There is only one of you and yet you can find your face reflected in each piece of that broken mirror at the same time."

Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is a mystery. It does not mean that we brush it away saying we cannot understand it. It means that it is beyond our understanding. On this Corpus Christi feast we say that Sacramentally, God is truly, really and substantially present among us in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. This happens through the mystery of

Transubstantiation in the Mass; the mystery of bread and wine though appear and taste the regular bread and wine; in their substance they are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. We know, even human words are powerful and do affect us. How many of us not still bothered by the words that we heard? the words acquire significance in the context they are said. In the game, the umpire says: Out! You are out. In the hospital doctor tells: you have cancer and you believe. In the Mass, on behalf of Jesus, Priest says: This is my body...this is my blood. They become his body and blood Jesus is truly, really and substantially present in the Eucharist and it is about closing the gap! As a result, the gap between matter and spirit, God and humanity are erased perpetually. Matter has become body of God. He is among us to be our Companion on our journey and to be our food and medicine in our life. It means that the Eucharist is the most intimate encounter we can have with Jesus Christ on this side of death. It is mind-blowing to think that I can take Jesus, my God into my person, into my heart, flowing through my veins.

St. Augustine said: "believe what you receive; Receive what you believe; Become what you receive." You eat what you are! Realize you are the body of Christ. The gap between you and God is closed. God has become part of you. Till we realize this great truth, we keep on receiving him. We read in Genesis about man and woman becoming one in marriage: when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, we are no longer two but one, and we and Jesus are intimately united. He is present not that we can adore Him but that we can be transformed into his little presences.

Today as we come to receive him in the Holy Communion, let us do three things: 1) Let us appreciate the "Real Presence" of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, by receiving him with true repentance for our sins, due preparation and reverence. 2) Let us be Christ-bearers and -conveyers: By receiving Holy Communion, we become Christ-bearers as Mary was, with the duty of conveying Christ to others, at home and in the workplace, through love, mercy, forgiveness and humble and sacrificial service. 3) Let us offer our lives on the altar along with Jesus' sacrifice, asking pardon for our sins, expressing gratitude for the blessings we have received and presenting our needs and petitions on the altar. **Amen.**