

Homily: Corpus Christi 2022: Gen 14: 18-20; Ps. 110; 1Corth 11: 23-26; Lk 9: 11-17
“The Lord Jesus’s Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist and how we can grow in our love for that Divine gift on a practical everyday level”

This week-end in the Catholic Church in America we celebrate the Solemnity of **Corpus Christi** or the Body and Blood of Christ and the beginning of a 3 yr. focus on revitalizing and renewing our Faith and love for the Holy Eucharist. As Catholics we believe the Eucharist in substance is truly the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity under the Sacramental signs of bread and wine. **It takes much faith to believe this mystery of Faith.** Troubling statistics over a couple of decades of surveys shows that many Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist! How tragic, for Jesus cannot help us if we don’t believe in Him. What can we practically do to grow in love for the Eucharist?

1. **Frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.** It is a troubling dynamic in the Church at least in America, where almost all Catholics come up for Communion, yet the Confession lines on Saturday at a typical parish Church, are almost non-existent – St. Thomas Parish is an exception to that rule – but some of us can always do better in that regard. Lack of Confession ties-in to the lack of belief among many Catholics in the Real Presence as cited above. What do you mean, Father? What does Confession have to do with our belief in the Real Presence and our reception of the Lord Jesus in Holy Communion? Well St. Paul says in his first letter to the Corinthians, of which we heard a part of it today, that before receiving the Lord Jesus in the Eucharist we MUST examine our consciences to ensure that we are not in grave or mortal sin. As he puts it, *“whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily sins against the Body and Blood of the Lord. A man should examine himself first (to make sure one is not subjectively in mortal sin); only then should he eat of the bread and drink of the cup. He who eats and drinks without recognizing the Body (and Blood) eats and drinks a judgment on himself. That is why many among you are sick and infirm and why so many are dying. If we were to examine ourselves, we would not be falling under judgment in this way; but since it is the Lord who judges us, He chastens us to keep us from being condemned with the rest of the*

*world.” (1 Corth 11: 27-32). Thus it behooves us to learn what the Church teaches is mortal sin and to avoid it at all costs! Probably the most common mortal sins in the modern world are skipping out on Sunday and Holy Day Mass for other activities and committing sins against holy purity: sexual sins of various sorts which are always objectively grave since our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Frequent Confession prepares our hearts and strengthens our wills to avoid serious sin and even the venial sins that damage our relationship with the Lord and weakens our Faith. Remember also prior to Communion: we are also called to keep **the 1 hr. fast**: no gum, candy, food or drink (water and medicine are allowed). **Spiritual Communions** also are very helpful – when we can’t receive Holy Communion as we all should know from the Covid shutdown in 2020.*

2. Another very important aid to growing in our Faith in this sublime gift of the Holy Eucharist, which is the primary means in this life that God wants to use to draw us into Triune love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the pious practice of coming to **Eucharistic adoration**. This has always been such an important part of my own life since my spiritual awakening at 17 that I can’t recommend it more highly. Like coming to Daily Mass, it is one of those things that doesn’t make sense in the abstract; you have to actually come to Eucharistic adoration to see its true value. **The proof is in the doing.** Here at St. Thomas Church, we have a number of opportunities for adoration: every Monday and 1st Friday after Mass; and on each Friday, the Hour of Mercy, from 3 PM until 4 PM when we have adoration and close with solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Please take advantage of this spiritual gift! It is so awesome! Who better to pour out your heart to and to sit quietly in Jesus’s Presence and be filled with His peace amidst all the troubles of daily life?! Please don’t let this pass you by. There are people here, esp. some of our young people, who maybe have never been to Benediction! Make a resolution to come on a Friday at 3 pm sometime this summer. And get in the habit when passing the Church to make the sign of the Cross as the Lord who in LOVE remains with us in the Tabernacle. If you want to **make a Eucharistic**

visit, stop by the Office and we will let you in – we unfortunately have to lock the Church because of past problems.

3. Finally if we truly want to grow in the likeness of Christ and to grow closer to Him through the gift of His Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist, we need to do our best to cultivate a “**spirit of recollection.**” The spirit of recollection, or being able to remain focused spiritually in our hearts and minds, is a gift of the Holy Spirit that we must beseech Him in love to bestow on us more and more each day. But **you and I can prepare our hearts** for this gift by trying our best to pull back from our noisy culture which even sometimes enters the doors of the Church (*try to be quieter in Church and go outside if you need to speak to someone especially in the nice weather months of the year*). **And try to be silent interiorly and exteriorly more and more**, and you will soon discover that God dwells within, in **the mystery of the Divine Indwelling**, as I mentioned in my homily last weekend on Trinity Sunday - which is deepened each time we receive Holy Communion with faith and devotion in the state of grace; and when we receive the Body and Blood of Christ we also mysteriously receive the gift of the Father and the Holy Spirit, for the 3 persons of the Blessed Trinity can never be separated! This will lead us **to want to make a profound Thanksgiving** after receiving the Body and Blood of the Lord; the saints recommend at least 15 minutes as soon as possible as to when you received the Lord in Holy Communion. What a transformative effect these **three** spiritual practices will have on our souls over time if we are open to the graces: **1.** Frequent Confession, **2.** Eucharistic adoration **3.** And cultivating a daily sense of recollection of the Divine Indwelling in our souls which leads to wanting to make a more profound Thanksgiving after receiving Holy Communion. Then you and I will be drawn into deep union with the Lord of Life, which is why He gave us the Eucharist in the first place (see John 6). And over time it will lead us to the fullness of charity, in love for God and for our fellow human beings whom we interact with on a daily basis. God bless you.

Recommended reading: **1.** *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* by Abbot Vonier (Ignatius Press). **2.** *In the Presence of Our Lord: The History, Theology, and Psychology of Eucharistic Devotion* by Father Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R., and James Monti (Our Sunday Visitor Press). **3.** *Catechism of the Catholic Church* paragraphs 1322-1419.