

Homily: The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi):

Cycle B: 2021: Ex 24:3-8; Ps 116; Heb 9:11-15; Mk 14: 12-16, 22-26

“Do we realize the gift that the Mass and the Holy Eucharist is?”

1. **Reality** - Jesus's one eternal Sacrifice for the salvation of the human race living and deceased is renewed at every Mass! Do we realize that fully? **If we do, we will never stay away from Mass unless we are gravely ill.** It is truly Jesus's Body and Blood under the signs of bread and wine. As Jesus tells us in the Gospel of John chapter 6, **He gives as his Body and Blood as true food and true drink.** It is not cannibalism because of the amazing way Jesus gives us Himself. The graces Jesus won for us on the Cross are applied to us and the whole world at every Mass; how much we benefit from them depends on the disposition of our hearts when we attend Mass and particularly when we receive Holy Communion. The offering of the Mass benefits both the living and the dead, which is why we offer Masses for our departed loved ones who may be in Purgatory being purified of the remnants of their sins and in desperate need of prayer - the most perfect of which is the Holy Mass. Jesus loves us so much to pour out His graces of salvation on all of us at each and every Mass. **The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Faith as Catholics,** which is also why we need to pray daily for an increase in vocations to the priesthood since the priesthood and the Eucharist are intimately connected, as well as for Catholics who have drifted away from the Mass out of indifference, lack of understanding, or because of grave sin.
2. **Reverence** - We are all called to adore the Lord in the Eucharist. I encourage all of you to come to our **3 PM Eucharistic holy hour** each Friday to adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, as well as after every Monday morning Mass. What a gift it is to adore our Blessed Lord! We share our life with our family and friends, why not with the source of our life, namely, the Lord Jesus? How you will be blessed if you do so - trust me! St. John Vianney once said, *that if more people would pray before the Blessed Sacrament our Church and our world would be converted and transformed by the Lord's love.* We all should have a profound spirit of reverence, thanksgiving and gratitude for the fact that Jesus gave us the

Eucharist as the perpetual memorial of His Holy Passion and that He will remain with us in all the Tabernacles throughout the world until He comes again in glory. What are some **practical things** we can do to show Him our reverence and our gratitude for this profound gift of His Body and Blood in the Eucharist? **The first and most important is to make sure we never receive Jesus in Holy Communion when we have mortal sin on our soul.** **We need to go to Confession first before receiving Holy Communion in that situation.** In addition we show our love for Him by remembering to keep the little one hour fast from food and drink (this includes gum and candy), with the exception of water and medicine, prior to receiving Holy Communion. Also genuflecting or bowing to the Tabernacle when entering Church and leaving. Not reading the bulletin or phones during Mass. Also trying to dress nicely for Mass shows that we recognize this as a special event and reality, and since Jesus wants to give Himself fully to us, we must show both exteriorly and interiorly that we are making the best of efforts to respond in kind. **We also should never come to Mass immodestly dressed; remember our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and we are never to be an occasion of sin for another.** Reverence also includes coming to Mass regularly on time and not leaving early unless we are feeling sick. Remember Mass begins with the opening hymn and doesn't officially end until the final hymn is ended. Finally we need to cultivate a spirit of recollection and prayer at Mass. Come early to prepare your heart for this gift of the Mass, and after Communion spend some minutes praying to the Blessed Trinity who is now in your heart, as I mentioned last week on Trinity Sunday - where Jesus is, so is the Father and the Holy Spirit. The saints recommend after receiving our Lord in Holy Communion to make a **15-30 minute quiet thanksgiving**, as soon as you can, in Church or outside of Church, in gratitude for receiving Jesus into our hearts. In relation to that, we also should try our best to not talk to and distract others unless absolutely necessary before, during, and after Mass until we get outside because other people are trying to pray - to go outside the interior of the Church to talk: this shows love for both God present in our Tabernacle and for our neighbor. Let's strive to always do that.

3. **Response** - The Eucharist or Mass should be the foundation of our spiritual life as Catholics. Sundays & Holy Days should be the highpoint of our life. We should also try to go to daily Mass, if that is possible depending on our schedules. It's only a half hour a day. All those who are **retired** should really try to attend daily Mass- at least one extra day a week - what a beautiful preparation to someday see the Lord. What is our overall response to the Lord? We are to offer the gift of our life in union with Jesus as He offers Himself to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit for our salvation at every Mass. *If we understand what a gift the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus is, we will always want to be here and never skip out: no vacation from Mass which sometimes happens, particularly in the summer. And would never dream of leaving the Catholic Church, despite whatever problems we may have sometimes on the human level.* The Body and Blood of Jesus is medicine for our souls to heal us of selfishness and sin and enable us to grow in goodness and virtue, in His image. **Depending on our disposition of heart and soul, each time we receive Holy Communion it should draw us deeper into the love of the Trinity** – spiritual communions help too. In Holy Communion, Jesus wants to turn us into the image of Himself more profoundly in self-giving love, generosity and kindness. The primary way this transformation into the image of Jesus occurs in our earthly journey is through the reception of the Eucharist with a humble heart and a deep faith in His Real Presence contained therein. Jesus also draws us and attracts us to a deeper spirit of **prayer** in our daily life the more we receive His Body and Blood with love and gratitude and with that deep spirit of faith and humility. He also enables us to see His image more profoundly in our **neighbor**, so we can truly love the Lord and serve Him in other human beings in a spirit of generosity. The Eucharist properly received will lead over time to works of kindness toward others. The fulfillment of the great commandment of love of God and neighbor will be clearly manifested - the more we respond to the gift of the Lord in the Holy Eucharist. Let us never take for granted the Blessed Sacrament: the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ our Savior. *O' Sacrament Most Holy, O' Sacrament Divine, May Praise and Thanksgiving be every moment Thine.* God bless you.