

Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ 2020 (A): Jesus feeds and unites our community to feed others

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Peace!

Today is the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of our Christ. The feast day of the source and summit of our Christian life.

Why do we need a feast of the Eucharist?

We heard from the Book of Deuteronomy in our first reading the reminder of Moses to the Israelite that they live not by bread alone but by the word of God. He recalled how God brought them out from slavery in Egypt to freedom, how God led and accompanied them, how God attended their thirst and hunger during their journey in the desert. Moses enjoined them to commit to their memory of how God saved them (cf. Deut. 8:2-3, 14-16).

This reminder speaks something to what we are celebrating. Our celebration of the feast day of Corpus Christi is an opportunity to a renewed and deeper appreciation of the Body and Blood of Christ's sacrament and to give God our collective thanks for Christ's abiding presence through the Holy Eucharist.

The gospel reading from chapter 6 of John's gospel provides us with thoughts to ponder about the beauty and grandeur of our celebration. The gospel, which is the discourse of Jesus on the Bread of Life, confirms and reiterates his promise to be with us until the end of time (cf. Mat. 28:20). Jesus said, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abide in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me" (Jn 6:56-57). It is without a doubt that our Lord offers his flesh and blood to be consumed. This is accomplished through the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, a gift par excellence of his tangible presence. It is his effective means of communicating the fullness of his life and divinity so that we can be fully alive in this world and the next (cf. Jn. 10:10) He categorically said, "Amen, Amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day" (Jn 6:53-54).

God has given us everything we could ever imagine. St. Thomas Aquinas, one of the great doctors of our Church, beautifully expressed this when he said, "God is all to you: if you are hungry, God is bread; if thirsty, God is water; in darkness, God is light; if naked, God is a robe of immortality." Imagine, God has given us everything! This incredible gift of God makes us sharers in the sacrifice of Christ. We heard St. Paul's exhortation, "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break is it not a participation in the body of Christ? (1 Cor 10:16). Beautiful! And so, there is no way we can offer the Eucharist and not reach out to the poor and needy in our community as Jesus did. It is the daily sacrifice and the giving of self to others either quietly or publicly during the week that gives us something to bring and offer to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on Sundays.

Yes, we are sharers in the sacrifice of Christ, and it is through this sacrifice that gathers and forms us as one community in which Christ is a communal possession. "Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (1 Cor 10:17). I dare say that these words of St. Paul seem to have no significance if a person who received Jesus and then goes home right away without waiting for the whole Body of Christ to be sent for a mission.

Let us always remember that the bland little host is the real food source for our community life. It contains real dynamite, higher energy. We don't think of it as pious, devotional terms, and for private consumption only. It is more than that! The Eucharist is Jesus. It is Jesus dying for us, sacrificing himself for us, and inviting us to keep his memory alive, his self-giving and selfless love for others.

God bless you.

In Christ,

Fr. Manny Hewe
Pastor, CCST