

Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ

June 6, 2021

Today with the whole Universal Church we celebrate the solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ popularly known as *Corpus Christi*. Corpus Christi is Latin for Body of Christ. This feast was established in the thirteenth century to encourage the faithful to give special reverence and adoration to the Holy Eucharist. Later, it was extended to the entire Latin Church by Pope Urban IV in 1264 and became a mandatory feast of the universal Church in 1312. Traditionally, this solemnity is celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. However, where it is not a day of obligation, it is celebrated on the Sunday following the Trinity Sunday. This special feast reminds us of the wonderful gift of God to us through the present of Jesus Christ under the form of bread and wine. Another word, the wonderful gift of God to us is the spiritual nourishment as well as the Body of Christ is present in the Church. When we talk about the Body and Blood of Christ today, we are talking about the Eucharist, the consecrated bread and wine.

The first reading today is from the Old Testament book called Exodus. This reading talks about the animal sacrifice that Moses made along with the Israelites after God gave him the commandments. God gave some rules to Moses what they were called the commandments. When he came down from the mountain, he and his people prepared an animal sacrifice which was their custom. They were celebrating the covenant that they had made with God. A covenant is a promise that the people of Israel promise to follow the rules God gave them. God will give to those who follow his commands the eternal life, heaven.

The gospel reading tells us of how Jesus and the Apostles were preparing to celebrate the Jewish feast of Passover. Jesus and his friends got together to celebrate this feast and something new happened. Saint Mark the Evangelist gives us detail account of what happened at the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist. Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted this Eucharist during the last Supper with the apostles the night before his death. Jesus knew that soon He will leave his disciples and go back to His father and so He had a last meal with them. On the day of the institution Jesus took a piece of bread, broke it and gave it to the disciples saying, "Take it; this is my body." He then did the same with the cup of wine telling them, "This is my blood of the covenant." Do this in remembrance me. By saying this bread becomes the Body of Jesus and wine becomes His Blood. From the words of the institution of this Holy Eucharist, we see Jesus gave an extensive teaching on the importance of His body that He called real food and His blood which He called real drink. Jesus found it is important to have his disciples believe in the reality of his presence in the Eucharistic bread and wine. Jesus wanted to enter our lives in a most tangible way, not as symbol and not as a memory.

This feast points to a greater kind of spiritual food, the Holy Eucharist. The Eucharist was established by Jesus Christ was not merely spiritual bread, but truly His body and blood. And down through the centuries, it has becomes our spiritual food at Mass. Jesus does truly love us so much that He has given Himself for us. He feeds us with Himself, with spiritual food. He promises always to be with us, in Sacrament, in Word, in every moment of our daily lives. That is why we gather here every week at Mass to be fed and to be nurtured our faith for we need to feed our spirits with spiritual food as we feed our bodies with regular food.

At the Last Supper Jesus gives us the sacrament of Eucharist, bringing eternal life to all who eat. We approach the table of the Eucharist to receive the bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Christ made present through the power of the Holy Spirit. This feast reminds us that the Eucharist is not merely a symbol, but Jesus Christ Himself given to us in the form of bread and wine and we experience a deep spiritual hunger and longing for it. Therefore, the Holy Eucharist is at the center of our Christian belief and life since the Holy Eucharist is a precious gift the God has given to us. This is the divine gift of Jesus. We believe the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist every time we celebrate the Mass. And the Eucharist is preserved in the Tabernacle where Jesus is really present in the form of bread and there Jesus waits for us to visit Him and talk with Him anytime. Tell Jesus that we believe that He is really present in the Blessed Sacrament and gradually grow from merely believing, to loving Jesus, and being loved by Jesus. Come to visit Jesus in the Tabernacle here in church often where you will have a wonderful opportunity to trust, surrender, believe and receive the love of Jesus.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we continue with the celebration of the Holy Mass, let us be thankful to the Lord Jesus for His Body and Blood that assures us our salvation. So when we are celebrating the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, we celebrate with our faith and belief. We believe that the Body and Blood Christ is a great mystery which is the real presence of Jesus under the form of bread and wine in the Eucharist. We believe that Jesus gave His life for our salvation and commanded us to celebrate the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist in His memory. We also believe that this feast is the spiritual nourishment that Jesus offers us in the Blessed Sacrament. Let us express our gratitude to God for the precious gift of Himself to us through Jesus Christ who sacramentally is present with us. We thank God for his continuing to nourish and sustain us with His very own presence and life. We ask for faith each day so that we continue to believe that Jesus is the "Bread of Life" and the "Cup of Salvation" that we always hunger for Him and be satisfied in Him alone.