

### **“Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ”**

Last week, we celebrated the solemnity of the Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This week, we are celebrating the Solemnity of the Holy Body and Blood of Christ otherwise known as Corpus Christi.

This feast day which was started first in France in the mid- thirteenth century comes up on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. Pope Urban IV extended it to the whole world in 1264 and commissioned St Thomas Aquinas to write a special liturgy for the celebration of Corpus Christi. Celebration of Corpus Christi was moved by bishops in the United States to Sunday so more people who could not otherwise attend the feast would be able to.

The primary purpose of the feast is to call our attention to the revelation that our Lord left us; the Holy Eucharist. The other purpose is the revelation of the mystical body of Christ, or the Church. The Church as the body of Christ could be surmised in what Jesus told Saul when Saul was on his way to Damascus to persecute Jesus’ followers or His Church. Jesus said **“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting ‘Me’?”** (Acts 9:4b).

On the eve of His passion and death, after eating the Passover, Jesus left us something more precious than gold, silver, diamond, or our lives. At the last supper, Our Lord gave us a gift of Himself in a mysterious way. That is the feast we are celebrating today. We can say it is the greatest of all His miracles and a consolation for those who would not see Him again until His second coming. Yes, in the Eucharist, Jesus instituted the Sacrament of unity.

We are mysteriously united to God through the incarnation of the Word when we receive the Eucharist. When we receive Him in the Eucharist, we are receiving the body and the flesh of the Son of God who when He became Man cloth Himself in our flesh uniting His flesh with His divinity. So when we who eat His flesh, we are united in Him and we become one in Him.

Our Lord told us in His last discourse **“In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live.”** Our being united with Him is not a question of seeing Him in our will. Jesus is in the Father by His divinity and we are in Him by His human nature and He is in us through the mystery of His sacraments. So the way we see Him is in the Eucharist.

It is in faith that we respond to Jesus in all instances. While Jesus is present to us in His word, He is also present to us in the people around us. We know that Jesus is present in the Eucharist because we believe in Him. Without that faith, we cannot even be Catholics.

In the early Church, St. Justin Martyr (AD 100-165), said about the Eucharist, ***“No one may share with us unless he believes that what we teach is true, unless he is washed in the regenerating waters of baptism for the remission of his sins, and unless he lives in accordance with the principles given us by Christ.”***

Yes there are other denominations that claim they have the Eucharist, please do not be deceived, they do not! Pope Leo XIII already did a study on it in 1896. For instance, if a denomination says

what is left over of their 'eucharist' turns back to ordinary bread, it is an obvious sign that they do not have the Real Presence. For example, in the early Church, according to St. Justin Martyr after they had received, "***The deacons take it to those who are absent***" (Sick). This was what was handed over to them by the Apostles. If what is left over turns back into ordinary bread, then it will be impossible for them to take it to those who are sick. It should be clear that the Catholic Church and those denominations are not receiving the same thing.

We receive our faith as gift from God through prayer. We must pray that God will help us to see, to appreciate, to venerate, and to love the presence of His Son in the Eucharist.