**“Corpus Christi”**

Today we celebrate the solemnity of Corpus Christi. Corpus Christi in Latin, means the Body of Christ. It is a truth in the Catholic Church that Jesus Christ is really Present, Substantially in the Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine during Mass. It a belief that after the priest pronounces the same words Jesus Christ Himself pronounced over bread and wine at the Last Supper, **“This is My Body,” “This is the chalice of My Blood,” “Do this in remembrance of Me.”** This mystery is referred to as transubstantiation.

Transubstantiation means ‘change of substance’ which means that the substance of the bread and the substance of the wine changed completely to the Body and Blood of Christ. This phenomenon is different from consubstantial which refers to the substance of the bread and wine coexisting with the body of and blood of Christ. For example in the Nicene Creed that we will soon say, we refer to Jesus as consubstantial with the Father which means they are of the same substance.

Let us look at a snapshot of the history of the origin of the feast of Corpus Christi. In the 13th century, a Norbertine canoness from Belgium, St Juliana of Liege, starting from the age of 16, had visions of the Moon. In her visions, she saw the Church in the image of a full moon but with a dark spot. The significance of the dark spot was that the Church, was missing the celebration of a specific feast that honors the Body and Blood of Christ.

St Juliana kept her vision a secret, because she felt insignificant to bring about the inclusion of the feast in the Liturgical calendar of the Church. However, when she was elected as mother superior, she told her confessor, who told the bishop. From that point on, wheels started turning and the feast was instituted and to be celebrated on the Thursday after the feast of the Most Holy Trinity Sunday. Thursday was chosen because it was the day the Eucharist was instituted at the Last Supper by Christ.

In our Gospel reading, we heard how Jesus during the bread of life discourse told His disciples that whoever eats His Flesh and drink His Blood, would remain in Him and He would remain in them. What a promise of having the Son of God dwelling in us not only spiritually but physically! This is the same Son of God who said His Father sent Him and He has life because of the Father, He now desire to give us eternal life by us eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood!

We heard that the Jews quarreled among themselves because some believed and some did not believe Him. It takes faith to believe in the mysteries of God and humility to act on them. We heard in our first reading how God tested the Jews by making them hungry before feeding them with manna from heaven. Manna is a Hebrew word which means “What is this.” He gave them this manna that sustained them daily for about 40 years!

God’s message to the Jews is the same words that Jesus used to defeat the devil in the desert after going without food for 40 days! The lesson is that we do not live on food alone but by every word that comes from God. Yes, our bodies need physical food, but more important is that our soul needs the spiritual nourishment that comes from the word of God. That is why Christ Himself, the true God is daily set before us as our food. As Jesus said in part of the Gospel, “Do not be afraid of he who can kill the body, but be afraid of Who can kill the body and the soul.

In the same way God tested the Jews, Jesus tested His disciples to see who would believe in His word, and who would not. The ultimate desire of God is the salvation of our all souls. His message is, it is only those who believe in Him and act on His word who will have eternal life. While the Jews ate manna that could not give eternal life, Jesus is the bread that gives eternal life to all those who believe in Him.

As we heard in our second reading, St. Paul believed in the word of Jesus during the Last Supper. He believed in the Eucharist. He believed that when Jesus said the blessings and said **“This is My Body,” “This is the chalice of My Blood,” “Do this in remembrance of Me,”** Jesus meant it! That Jesus was not talking figuratively. That He meant every word. How can anybody think otherwise, unless they are turning a blind eye to the truth!

[[1]](#endnote-2)Paul went further by saying, the loaf of Bread is one and though they were many, but as one, they all eat of the one loaf. Well, my brothers and sisters that must have been a gigantic loaf of bread that thousands of people would have been sharing. I am sure they did not have the means or the technology to bake such a loaf. The one loaf of bread that Paul was talking about is the same loaf of bread that over a billion people eat now in our present world. The loaf of bread is the Body and Blood of Christ. It is the Eucharist and Christ is the one loaf of Bread.

As you are all here today to worship God and not to socialize, I am sure of the reason why you are here. The main reasons are, to hear the word of God and receive Him into your body. He left us His body and Blood to show us how much He loves us. We cannot be more intimately united to Him than when we eat His flesh and drink His blood. The Eucharist is a gift that has no equal!

As we come to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us thank Him for His gift that would raise us to new life.

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)