

CORPUS CHRISTI 2021

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ popularly called Corpus et Sanguis Christi or in short Corpus Christi.

The two last precious gifts given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ were the Holy Eucharist as our spiritual food, on Holy Thursday at the Last Supper, and His mother Mary as our mother, on Good Friday on Cavalry.

Corpus Christi is the celebration of the abiding presence of a loving God as *Emmanuel* – God with us. And so, we His Church offer collective thanks to our Lord living with us in the Holy Eucharist. This feast gives us an occasion to learn more about the importance and value of the “Real Presence” of Christ so that we may better appreciate the Sacrament of the Eucharist from which we receive maximum benefit.

Key here is the real presence of Christ explained by transubstantiation” which means that the *substance* of the consecrated bread and wine is changed to Jesus’ glorified body and blood by the action of the Holy Spirit though its *accidents* like color, shape, taste, etc., remain the same.

Let us appreciate the “Real Presence” of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, by receiving Him with true repentance for our sins, due preparation and reverence. St. Paul us warns us to examine ourselves before we eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself/herself. (1 Cor. 11:28).

Our readings today emphasize the theme of the covenant blood. The ancient peoples sealed covenants with the blood of ritually sacrificed animals, and Jesus sealed His New Covenant with His own blood, shed on Calvary. Today’s *1st reading* describes how Moses, by sprinkling the blood of a sacrificed animal on the altar and on the people, accepted the covenant Yahweh made with His People. In the *2nd reading*, St. Paul affirms that Jesus sealed the New Covenant with His own blood, thereby putting an end to animal sacrifices. Today’s *gospel* details how Jesus converted this ancient ritual into a sacrament and sacrifice. Instead of the lamb’s blood, He offered his own divine/human body and blood: *“Take, this is my body.”* He did not say “this represents my body,” *“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”*

Jesus thus instituted the Holy Eucharist as a sacramental banquet that gives us God’s grace and God’s life and nourishes our souls as a meal. As a sacrifice, the Eucharistic celebration is an unbloody re-enactment of His sacrifice on Calvary, completed in His Resurrection. We offer Jesus’ sacrifice to God the Father on the altar during the Eucharistic celebration for the remission of our sins, using signs and symbols.

Knowing that He is truly present in the Eucharistic species, we adore Him always. In support of the practice of Holy Hour and Benediction, St. Augustine says *“No one should eat this flesh without first adoring it. We should sin were we not to adore it.”* Adoration outside Mass prolongs and intensifies all that takes place during the liturgical celebration itself. Indeed, *“only in adoration can a profound and genuine reception mature.”*

Time before the Blessed Sacrament is an important and necessary part of a healthy prayer life and a critical part of our faith journey as Catholics. To be in the same room with the true presence of our Lord and be humbled by His love and grace is an indescribable feeling we all get to. Our parish is blessed with semi-perpetual Eucharistic Adoration. This is an incredible access to Christ whom we humbly seek out at every opportunity for worship, prayer and to unburden ourselves to Him. Adoration is back to the Chapel and we still have slots to fill on our Adoration chapel schedule.

Let us become Christ-bearers to other people when we receive Holy Communion and bear Christ as Mary did with the duty of conveying Him to others at home, at school, in the gym, on the road and in the workplace, through our love, mercy, forgiveness and humble and sacrificial service.

May we continue praying for a better understanding of the Holy Eucharist, so that we may always and truly adore Christ therein. Amen.