

Homily – Corpus Christi A

1) The two, last, precious gifts given to us by Jesus are the Holy Eucharist as our spiritual Food and Drink on Holy Thursday and Jesus' mother Mary as our mother on Good Friday. 2) Corpus Christi is the celebration of the abiding presence of the loving God as Emmanuel – God-with-us – in order to give collective thanks to our Lord living with us in the Eucharist. 3) The feast gives us an occasion to learn more about the importance and value of his “Real Presence,” so that we may appreciate the Sacrament better and receive maximum benefit from receiving Jesus in Holy Communion.

We believe in the “Real Presence” of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist because 1) Jesus promised it after miraculously feeding the 5000. 2) Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist during his Last Supper. 3) Jesus commanded his disciples to repeat it in his memory. 4) “Nothing is impossible for God.”

We explain the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist by: “transubstantiation” which means that the substance of the offered bread and wine is changed by Consecration to the substance of the risen Jesus' glorified, Body and Blood by the action of the Holy Spirit, and its accidents or appearances (like color, shape, smell, taste etc.), remain the same.

In the first reading, Moses instructs the Israelites to “remember and not forget” the miraculous provision of food in the manna given to them to save their lives in the desert. The Church, through the Holy Mass, remembers and re-presents the Sacramental meal (Last Supper) and Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary sealed by the Father as acceptable by granting him Resurrection.

In the second reading, Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Bread they share is the real Body of Christ, which makes their community also the Body of the risen Christ.

In today's Gospel passage, Jesus identifies himself as “the Living Bread that came down from Heaven,” thus linking himself with the manna in the wilderness, while assuring his disciples that, unlike those who ate manna, “One who eats this Bread will live forever.”

A Sacrament and a sacrifice: Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist both as a sacramental banquet and a sacrificial offering. As a Sacrament a) the Eucharist is a visible sign that gives us God's grace and God's life and b) as a meal it nourishes our souls. As a sacrifice a) the Eucharistic celebration is a re-presentation or re-enactment of Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary, completed in His Resurrection. b) We offer Jesus' sacrifice to God the Father for the remission of our sins, using signs and symbols.

Messages: 1) 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.

2) Let us be Christ-bearers and -conveyers: By receiving Holy Communion, we become Christ-bearers as Mary was, with the duty of conveying Christ to others, at home and in the workplace, through love, mercy, forgiveness and humble and sacrificial service.

3) Let us offer our lives on the altar along with Jesus' sacrifice, asking pardon for our sins, expressing gratitude for the blessings we have received and presenting our needs and petitions on the altar.