

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi). The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of the Eucharist as the source and summit of ecclesial life and its relationality to salvation history. “At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ’s Body and Blood.” Faithful to the Lord’s command the Church continues to do so, in his memory and until his glorious return, what he did on the eve of his Passion: ‘He took bread...’ ‘He took the cup filled with wine...’ The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ; they continue also to signify the goodness of creation. Thus, in the Offertory we give thanks to the Creator for bread and wine, fruit of the ‘work of human hands,’ but above all as ‘fruit of the earth’ and ‘of the vine’—gifts of the Creator. The Church sees in the gesture of the king-priest Melchizedek, who ‘brought out bread and wine,’ a prefiguring of her own offering.” [The Eucharist in the Economy of Salvation, CCC #1333].

In connection with the economy of salvation, that is to say, the way in which God reveals his plan for our redemption, our feasts and solemnities over these past few weeks is intrinsically connected with the Body and Blood of Christ. We celebrated the Ascension of our Lord; Pentecost, and the Most Holy Trinity. Each of these celebrations in the liturgical life of the Church points to the interconnectedness between Father, Son, and Spirit. The Son, in the Incarnation, dwells among humankind teaching of God’s plan of salvation, healing and feeding the poor, sacrificing his life for the forgiveness of our human weakness and sins, and then completes his earthly mission and returns in glory to the Father, his first and last destination. At Pentecost, the fruits of the love between Father and Son becomes manifest. The Holy Spirit dwells within the disciples and they are given the zeal and character needed to proclaim the Good News even in the most difficult circumstances. In both the Ascension and at Pentecost, these events of salvation history are rooted in obedience, surrender, suffering, and redemption. Are these not also essential elements of the Eucharist? In the Trinity, we see again a love of mutuality and self-giving and sacrifice, the most perfect kind of love.

In the August/September 2018 edition of “First Things” magazine, the authors Gilbert Meilaender and Peter Meilaender write that “to be human is to recognize a seemingly permanent tension between the particular and the universal in our loves, our loyalties, and our commitments.” When I first read this statement, I was immediately struck by the truth of this sentiment particularly as it relates to our Christian lives. We have the desire to live holy and virtuous lives and yet we sometimes fall short. Reception of the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord along with making available to us the Sacrament of Confession or Reconciliation can help to bridge the chasm between the desire and the practical. Jesus himself offered these great sacrificial gifts when he fed the multitudes and when he healed those with unclean spirits.

On this Feast of Corpus Christi, let us pray in thanksgiving and gratitude for the multitude of blessings God gives to us. We are grateful for his Body and Blood, gifts of himself to us...to nourish us...sustain us...on this earthly pilgrimage until we meet him in eternal glory!

Fr. Tom