

The Solemnity of Corpus Christi in the Cycle C

The Body and Blood of Christ

Many of us have experienced the pain of loss, caused by being separated from those we love. We think of the families whose loved ones, in decades past, left these shores for distant lands to begin new lives or to work as missionaries. Before the age of the internet these families could only rely on occasional letters and, if they were very fortunate, a rare phone call from their loved one.

Being God and Man, Jesus understands our needs.

As an only child, he understood how hard it would be for his Mother, to journey through the rest of her life without him. Jesus knew how much his friends would miss him, the Apostles and disciples who had followed him tirelessly during his active ministry. Jesus also knew how hard it would be for his unknown disciples who in the centuries ahead would face rejection, persecution and even martyrdom.

And so, on Holy Thursday, knowing that he would be going to the Father, Jesus gave us the Eucharist. The Eucharist is his gift to us, the gift of his abiding presence. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, and the ministry of the priest, Jesus gives us the fullness of his being; body, blood, soul and divinity (CCC 1374), until he comes again.

By choosing to abide with us, in the form of consecrated bread and wine, Jesus indicates that his primary intention is not to be venerated, " ...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many " (Mathew 20:28). Jesus could easily have chosen to abide with us in Silver and Gold, but he chose to abide with us as food. He did so in order that he might nourish us with food for eternal life, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:51)

This food that Jesus gives is not for nourishment alone. It is medicine to heal us of our failings, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17). By sharing in the Eucharist we are healed because we share in the Divine life of Christ. The Eucharist...

- Increases our intimate union with Christ. (Cf. [CCC 1325, 1391](#))
- Reinforces our unity as the People of God, Christ's mystical body (Cf. [CCC 1396, 1398](#)), "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf" (1 Cor 10:17).
- Removes venial sins and increases our capacity for charity toward God and our neighbour. (Cf. [CCC 1394](#))
- Strengthens us against committing grave sins. (Cf. [CCC 1395](#))
- Helps us to resist temptation (Cf. [CCC 1393](#)).

Let us draw close to Jesus in the Eucharist, remembering the words of St Alphonus de Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists, "This loving Shepherd of ours did not wish to separate himself from us by dying. Here I am, for you I stayed on earth in this Sacrament; here, whenever you wish, you will always find me, to help and comfort you with my presence; while you live on this earth, I will never leave you until the end of the world".