

Beloved in Christ, today, we are celebrating the Solemnity of **Corpus Christi**. **The feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ** gives us an opportunity to focus our attention on this basic mystery of our faith, the Eucharist, and to explore the meaning of the Eucharist in our worship and in our daily life. What is the Eucharist? The Eucharist is both **a sacrament and a sacrifice**. The Eucharist is a sacrament, an outward sign in and through which we meet Jesus, who shares His life of grace with us. In this Sacrament of Eucharist, we do meet Jesus Himself who comes to us under **forms of bread and wine to nourish and strengthen us** for our journey to heaven. We see with human eyes what looks like bread and wine, **but, in the eyes of faith**, we see the **Risen and Living, Lord Jesus Christ (CCC 1357; SC.47)**. The Eucharist is a sacrifice, the re-presentation or re-living in an unbloody manner of Christ's Death on Good Friday and of His Resurrection on Easter Sunday. St. Ignatius of Antioch spoke about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and "one bread that provides **the medicine for immortality**" (cf. Ad Eph.20, 2; Jn.6:51; 58). Thomas Aquinas also affirmed the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in the hymn Tantum Ergo: "**Down in adoration falling, this great Sacrament we hail. Faith will tell us Christ is present, when our human senses fail.**"

In the first reading, we heard that Melchizedek (priest and king of righteousness) offered bread and wine to Abraham and his men, and grateful for his kindness, Abraham offered to Melchizedek one tenth of the booty he had recovered (Gen.14:20). The bread and wine that Melchizedek offered to Abraham have become a symbol of Eucharist, and that Jesus, our High Priest, generously offers to all mankind, the church sees as food and as a source of all blessings. The Gospel also begins with Jesus welcoming the crowd, and talking to them about the kingdom of God...(Lk.9:11). Luke also tells us how Jesus invited his apostles to provide food for the crowd "give them something to eat yourselves" (Lk.9:13). Jesus used the boy's five loaves and the two fish to indicate his acceptance of bread and wine, the gift of the community, and in return, he makes use of them to prepare his own Body and Blood, his gift to the community in return. Finally, Paul in the second reading gives the narrative of the institution of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, closely resembling the one in the Gospels (cf. 1Cor.11:23-26).

The Eucharist is the highest expression of prayer and the summit of our worship (LG. 11). In John 6: 48-58; Christ reveals the mystery of the Eucharist: he is the Bread of Life who gives himself sacramentally as genuine food. The Third Commandment reminds us to worship the Lord on His Day. Because Christ's Resurrection and the Coming of the Holy Spirit took place on Sunday, the early Christians made the first day of the week "the Lord's Day." As Catholics, we fulfill the Third Commandment by coming together to worship Him at Mass and to receive him, the **Bread of Life for our spiritual nourishment**.

Finally, dear friends, any time we celebrate the Eucharist, we are being reminded of our covenant with God, which we made in our baptism, so let us take the admonishing of St. Paul seriously, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer... **a person should examine himself or herself before eating the bread and drinking the cup (1 Corinthians 11:27-30)**. Our Savior complained bitterly to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque about **our lukewarm love, ingratitude, and irreverence** as against his fervent and unconditional love. **St. Augustine wrote that Christ – the same in flesh as walked the earth – gave that same flesh to us to be consumed for our salvation. Moreover, says Augustine, no one eats that Flesh unless he has adored it.... and we sin by not adoring it.** Therefore, let us do our best to acknowledge the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and to approach him with a heart full of love, gratitude and reverence in order to **receive all the blessings in our worship. Amen!**