

Corpus Christi C 2019
1COR 11:23-26

This evening's (morning's) letter to the Corinthians recounts for us the happenings of that first Holy Thursday night. That was a night the apostles, a night the entire Church, for that matter, by divine institution, will never forget; for on that night, in the sacred meal, in the Eucharist, Christ told us to remember his death. "Do this in remembrance of me." That meal was a memorial of his death.

We are very akin to remembering death. A month ago, our country observed Memorial Day to recall the soldiers who sacrificed their lives to preserve the freedom of this great nation. Two weeks ago, we remembered the 75th anniversary of the Normandy invasion on D-Day. At the death of a loved one, we treasure their memorials. We cut out their obituary, we save their Mass cards and their holy cards. We press their rose pedals into our treasured book of memories, never to be forgotten. No matter how painful it was, we remember the what, the when, the where and the how of their death that affected us so deeply.

On today's feast of Corpus Christi, the Church treasures the memorial of the suffering and death of her Redeemer; She

recalls the what, the when, the where and the how of that first Holy Thursday night, the night when our Blessed Lord, by divine institution, gave us the Eucharist, His body and blood, not symbolically, but truly, really and substantially.

To quote the Council of Trent, the consecration is:

The wonderful and unique conversion of the total substance of the bread into the total substance of the body and of the total substance of the wine into the total substance of the blood of Christ, with only the species of bread and wine remaining.

The Church teaches so very clearly that the Eucharist is truly, really and substantially the Body and Blood of Christ, and she teaches this because it is explicitly found in sacred scripture.

In the sixth chapter of John's gospel, when the Jews quarreled about eating his flesh, Jesus clarified his real presence in the Eucharist. Twelve times Jesus said He was the bread that came down from heaven. Four times Jesus said we must "eat his flesh and drink his blood." Jesus said, "My flesh is real food, my blood is real drink." At the Last Supper, Jesus took bread and wine in his sacred hands and said, "This is my body. This is my blood." Jesus did not speak English. Jesus spoke Aramaic and the verb "is" in Aramaic means "is." It does not mean represents, not symbolizes, not exemplifies. John 6

is an extended promise of what Jesus instituted at the Last Supper – and it was a promise that could not be more explicit. Or so it would seem to a Catholic.

Within the past year, I read an article that said one third of Catholics do not believe the Eucharist is truly the Body of Christ, but merely a symbol of the Body of Christ. If the Eucharist as merely a symbol, if the Eucharist is merely bread:

- ✓ Then why would the leftovers be stored in a sacred tabernacle that must remain locked and unmoved?
- ✓ Why would Catholics genuflect before this bread as if it is God?
- ✓ Why would Catholics kneel before this bread in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament?
- ✓ Any why would we consecrate a chapel so we can kneel in adoration 24/7, any time, day or night?
- ✓ Why would there be such regulations about its reception?
- ✓ Why would young children not be permitted to receive Holy Communion?
- ✓ Why would those in invalid marriages not be permitted to receive Holy Communion?
- ✓ Why is there so much discussion over oxymoronic Catholic pro-death/ pro-choice politicians receiving Holy Communion?

- ✓ Why would we even call it Communion, so we could be in Communion with a piece of bread, or so we could be in Communion with Christ?

No one in their right mind would be so particular about a piece of bread. The Eucharist is not bread. The Eucharist is the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ, no different that if He were to walk down the center aisle of this Church. In the Eucharist, Christ told us to remember his death. The Eucharist is a memorial of His death.

Not only is Jesus' death remembered in the Eucharist, but the Eucharist also gives you a glimpse of the infinite love that God the Father has for you. For God so loved the world that He gave us His Son.

Any man would give His own life for a just cause: his wife, his children, his country, his fellow man. Last week was Father's Day. A father, however, would not even consider giving the life of one of his children for the same cause. A father's love for his child is so great, and his paternal instinct to protect his children is so strong, there would be no cause great enough to warrant their life. He would give his own life, but he would never give the life of his child. That would be unheard of

. . . for a man, but not for God. God the Father loved us so much he gave us His only Son.

Jesus' death is not only remembered in the Eucharist but His death also gives a glimpse of the infinite love God the Father has for us.

On this monumental weekend in the life of St. Mary of the Lakes when we consecrate our Eucharistic Adoration Chapel, I'll close this homily quoting Pope Emeritus Benedict:

I would like to affirm with joy that today in the Church there is a "Eucharistic springtime": How many persons pause silently before the Blessed Sacrament to spend time in a conversation of love with Jesus! It is consoling to know that not a few groups of young people have rediscovered the beauty of praying in adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament.

I pray so that this Eucharistic "springtime" will spread increasingly in every parish. St. John Paul II, in the encyclical "Ecclesia de Eucharistia," said: "In many places, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is also an important daily practice and becomes an inexhaustible source of holiness. The devout participation of the faithful in the Eucharistic procession on the Solemnity of the Body and

Blood of Christ is a grace from the Lord which yearly brings joy to those who take part in it. Other positive signs of Eucharistic faith and love might also be mentioned."

(No. 10).

. . . . We also renew our faith in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. As we are taught by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist in a unique and incomparable way. He is present in a true, real and substantial way, with his Body and his Blood, with his Soul and his Divinity. In the Eucharist, therefore, there is present in a sacramental way, that is, under the Eucharistic species of bread and wine, Christ whole and entire, God and Man" (No. 282).

Dear friends, fidelity to the encounter with the Eucharistic Christ in Sunday's Holy Mass is essential for the journey of faith, but let us try as well to frequently go to visit the Lord present in Adoration! Gazing in adoration at the consecrated Host, we discover the gift of the love of God, we discover the passion and the cross of Jesus, and also his Resurrection. Precisely through our gazing in adoration, the Lord draws us to himself, into his mystery, to transform us as he transforms the bread and wine. The

saints always found strength, consolation and joy in the Eucharistic encounter. With the words of the Eucharistic hymn "Adoro te devote," let us repeat before the Lord, present in the Most Blessed Sacrament: "Make me believe ever more in You, that in You I may have hope, that I may love You!