



CORPUS CHRISTI – June 23, 2019

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is the feast of Corpus Christi; the feast of the Holy Eucharist. We recall the presence of our Lord on our altars and in our tabernacles. We believe that Jesus is really, truly and substantially present under the appearances of bread and wine.

We also believe that our Lord is present in our world in one other marvelous, mysterious, miraculous way. We believe that whatever we do to the least of our brothers and sisters, we do to Him. He is present in each one of us.

Why do we believe that Jesus is present in the Eucharist? We believe because he said so. Why do we believe that he is present in the least of our brothers and sisters? Again, we believe because he said so.

It isn't possible to give reverence to Jesus in the Eucharist and at the same time ignore him in our brothers and sisters who are in need. And yet, there are some Catholics who do that. They miss the extended meaning of Corpus Christi. They miss the Mystical Body of Christ.

Let me share a story that is most fitting for this feast day. Several years ago, we buried a priest of our diocese, Father Tom Edwards. He was a man who could see Jesus in every single human being, rich and poor, young and old alike. He worked in an inner-city parish and every hungry person in town would wind up at his doorstep.

He once had a bunch of kids in the rectory for the weekly CCD class. He was teaching them about the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. In the middle of his presentation, a beggar showed up at the door. It was a man who was willing to work but was no longer able. He had been there before. Father Edwards knew him well.

One of the kids answered the door, came back into the room and announced to everyone. "There's a bum at the door." Father Edwards said, "That's not a bum. that's Jesus." After he gave the man something to eat, he came back to the class and said, "OK, what have you guys learned today?"

One of the kids who had studied the lesson said, "I learned that Jesus is really, truly and substantially present under the appearances of bread and wine." Another kid was able to see beyond the words in the book. He said, "I learned that it was Jesus who came to the door for food". One of the little girls said, "I learned that it was Jesus who gave him something to eat..."

It is the Feast of Corpus Christi. Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. But that's not the only place you can find him. He is present in each one of us too.

For a few moments in silence, reflect on what you believe about the Eucharist, and what you believe about the "bums" who come to your door.