

## **Who is Jesus Christ Today?**

Corpus Christi (Year B)

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Fr. Tony Davis

The sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, so central to the Catholic faith, points us to the presence of Christ in the present moment. That's why we call it the real presence. While Jesus instituted this sacrament at the Last Supper many centuries ago and while this sacrament foreshadows the eternal heavenly banquet at the end of time, it is ultimately about Jesus Christ being with us here and now. Christ comes to us in the form of bread and wine in our concrete space and time.

The Lutheran theologian and pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer never tired of asking the question, 'who is Jesus Christ today?' For him, that was the essential question for the Christian. Knowing who Jesus Christ was in the past or will be in the future may be interesting for us to consider, but they are not of primary importance for us. Those questions were already asked and answered by the in the past or will be asked and answered by Christians in the future. It is our duty to ask for ourselves, 'who is Jesus Christ today.' We are the only ones who can ask and answer that question. If we don't, we will miss our opportunity to contribute to the great tradition of the Catholic faith.

One of the biggest obstacles for us in following Jesus Christ in the present moment is to think that we already know in advance where he is leading us. In his book *Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer writes, "where will the call to discipleship lead those who follow it? What decisions and painful separations will it entail? We must take this question to him who alone

knows the answer. Only Jesus Christ, who bids us follow him, knows where the path will lead.” (40) In other words, the way to find our answer is to drop all of our pre-made answers and ask the question in a radically new and open way. This can be an uncomfortable experience, for as Bonhoeffer suggests, it will bring pain and separation. Yet, that is the cost of discipleship.

Admittedly, even after dropping all of pre-made answers, knowing who Jesus Christ is today and what he wants from us does involve ambiguity. Ever since his Ascension into heaven, Jesus is no longer physically with us to dictate what we should do. Furthermore, different people might come to different conclusions on where he is leading us, both individually and collectively. But one of the major signs that we are indeed following Jesus Christ today is that we are trying to provide nourishment for the world around us. Just as he nourishes us Catholics in the Holy Eucharist with his body and blood, we too must make an attempt to nourish those in our own contemporary setting. Sometimes, that involves doing things differently or unconventionally. Keeping Jesus for ourselves, excluding those we think are unworthy, or refusing to engage the present moment are all forms of malnourishment. We are called to be nourishment for the life of the world.

*The real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ should focus us on the question ‘Who is Jesus Christ today?’ What are my pre-made answers about what the Church should be? (Those are going to be your biggest obstacles to answering the question)*

On this Corpus Christi weekend, we ask ourselves, ‘who is Jesus Christ today.’ Let us turn for inspiration to sacrament which tells us Christ is truly present.