

2020 June 14

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Sunday after Trinity Sunday:

Readings:

First: Deuteronomy 8.2-3, 14-16, "He fed you in the wilderness with manna." (16a)

Psalm: 147, "He fills you with the finest of wheat." (14b)

Second: 1 Corinthians 10.16-17, "Is it not a sharing in the Body of Christ?" (16b)

Gospel: John 6.51-59, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me." (56a)

The great Divide

The Body that was offered to be broken and the Blood for shedding, and which was given as food and drink for the eternal life of humans became the object of contention, split, and deserting by many followers of Jesus. The moment of this offer was also the final testing point for his disciples to decide for or against Jesus. When many others walked away from Jesus, he asked the disciples if they too wanted to go. As always, Peter took the lead to stay. The Holy Eucharist continues to divide Christians.

If we Catholics ask ourselves whether we truly understand this mystery the real answer would be 'no'. It is not necessarily our intellectual perception of the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ that leads us to celebrate the sacrifice, which is beyond human capacity. Faith in Jesus Christ and in his words leads us to celebrate this Eucharistic feast and to partake in this meal, which is also a foretaste of the heavenly banquet we aspire for and move toward. ***"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you"***, and ***"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in them"*** (John 6.53b, 56). We the Catholics take these words of Jesus seriously and that is the reason we are here for this celebration.

This food and this drink make us one in Jesus; make us into the body of Christ, the Church. This is what St. Paul says to the Corinthians, ***"Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread"*** (1 Corinthians 10.17). Moses in Deuteronomy refers to God feeding the wandering Israelites in the desert with manna in order to make them understand that ***"man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of the Lord"*** (Deuteronomy 8.3b).

The wonderful transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ happens by the word that comes out of the mouth of the Lord. It was this word that became flesh and that flesh is given to us as food for eternal life. We worship the Lord in this flesh and we worship him in this spirit. We celebrate the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ and we feast on this Body and Blood through which we become one Body, the Body of Christ!

Fr. George