

## **Solemnity of the Body & Blood of Christ / Year A / June 14, 2020 (Fr. Giese)**

I have always believed that the power of God is able to bring good from any situation, including the shutdown we have been experiencing for three months. Some of the good people have already witnessed and even participated in such as neighbors helping neighbors, checking on the elderly who have been isolated, donating plasma, travelling across the country to work in hospitals where the staff were overwhelmed and things like that. There have been food drives too, like the one here last Saturday, where people have shared what they have to help meet the needs of others because they have seen people who are out of work and running out of food and wanted to help them. Others have sewn masks and made them available for those who need them and in doing so been able to provide a much-needed resource, especially at the beginning of the crisis when they were scarce.

Some of the good to come from the shutdown is also tangible but more private. There are families who have spent more time together than they ever would have otherwise and it has been a time for them to bond to one another. One family shared with me that without sports to watch on television or for their children to participate in they have had family meals for the first time in a long time and they have enjoyed them. Another good that many of us now experience as a result of the shutdown is a change in attitude where we take less for granted than before and are more grateful for the good things we have, even the little things.

I believe that will also be true for us now when it comes to Holy Communion, when we receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ that he gave to us, for us to be in union with him. In some ways, it is a small thing, a wafer of wheat bread when Mass begins. When it is consecrated by the priest it still retains the appearance of a small piece of bread. But we know that the consecrated host is more than that, that it is the flesh of Jesus Christ, a divine gift derived from Jesus' self-sacrifice on the cross. We know and believe that it contains, his soul and divinity and that it is given to us to nourish us in holiness; to strengthen our hearts for the Christian journey we have undertaken. The eucharist, Holy Communion, is food for the soul. It gives us the courage to forgive and to follow Jesus. We are not worthy of such a gift but Jesus gives himself to us in Holy Communion anyway. It is a foretaste of heaven itself where we hope to be with Jesus in his Father's house.

## **Solemnity of the Body & Blood of Christ / Year A / June 14, 2020 (Fr. Giese)**

And Holy Communion, for most of us, is also something we have never had to do without before. It has always been available to us, especially in an area like this, where churches are easy to access and there are enough priests to staff them. This is not the case in other parts of the country or other parts of the world where access to Mass and Holy Communion is not so easy. Indeed, in some countries, attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion brings with it danger as we know from the attacks on churches and the people worshipping inside that have occurred in parts of the world.

But we have not faced that here. We have never been deprived by outside circumstances, other than weather, from attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion when we wanted. For us, the greatest danger has been taking Holy Communion for granted, presuming on its availability, and perhaps approaching it without the spiritual preparation we should or letting the moment unfold without an expression of thanks.

It is my hope that one of the good things that will come to each of us as we emerge from this desert, this time of privation, is a greater desire, greater zeal for Jesus and for receiving Him in Holy Communion with greater intensity in our hearts; that our longing for union with Jesus will be stronger than before and not just because of the absence from Mass for a few months but also because our desire for union with him has been strengthened by our time with him in prayer, by encountering him in the gospels we have taken time to read, by the blessing we have found in our families, and by the sacrifices we have made, by the Masses we have watched from a distance and by the spiritual communions with him you have made. All of that will enhance your experience of receiving Jesus again in Holy Communion. That is certain. What you should know as well is that it just as certain that Jesus is even more eager, to once again, be in communion with you.