

## **Most Holy Blood and Body of Christ/Corpus Christi ABC 2009**

Are you hungry?

Today is the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. Years ago, we called today Corpus Christi Sunday.

We celebrate this day after 50 days of Easter joy, after our Church's birthday at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit filled the apostles with mission and after our celebration last Sunday of the most Holy Trinity, as we understand our one God's presence in three persons.

Here we, today, celebrate that Jesus makes himself present, really present in the world even as he sits at the right hand of the Father.

Jesus has made himself present to feed our hunger so that we can make him present as we feed those who are hungry. In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells us, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.

This hunger, this thirst is a longing that everyone is born with. It is what drives us and calls us to our ultimate completion and destiny.

St. Augustine recognized it when he said, "You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

All the best things to which we aspire are motivated by this hunger, this holy longing. It is our search for our soul mate, our desire to be creative, our passion for life and the yet to be discovered. It is the place of joy and frustration, grief and fulfillment.

Karl Rahner speaks about this as the "torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable."

I had to cook on that a bit. Let me repeat, "the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable." You just got to love those human beings. They are just never satisfied.

We were created with the hunger to seek God, to be co-creators with him in this universe and to enjoy Him and each other for eternity.

That hunger is often directed towards other ends. I'm talking about how people look to satiate themselves with drugs, alcohol, promiscuous sex, attainment of wealth, position and power. How do these translate into fullness of life here and into eternity? They are dead ends.

However, we can look for fulfillment in friends, mates, family and service to others. Can you see how life giving this is? Can you see how this can translate into eternity? That's what Jesus showed us.

God gave us life and he gave us his very life. He put on our flesh and blood and made the divine real and the real divine. And as he ascended to his Father's right hand, he made sure that he would stay real, that we would stay real. He offered the reality that feeds our divine hunger to live life, to live it fully and forever.

At the altar during the preparation of gifts, the priest or deacon prays over the chalice, "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of the one who humbled himself to share in our humanity."

St. Augustine said "Through bread and wine, the Lord gives us His body and blood. If you receive them well, you are that which you receive, you become what you eat. That is the call of God to us." (Sermon 227, PL,#38,1099)

My Grampa Mac passed away after a prolonged bout with emphysema. He was not a saintly man, but he treated me like gold. He had been raised in the hills of Pennsylvania where there was a deep oral tradition. He knew his Bible verses backwards and forwards. I hate to think what kind of a son of a gun he would have been if he hadn't been a Christian.

Well, I would visit him as he was laid out in bed during the last year of his life. His illness was degenerative. He didn't know how much time he had left, but he knew he would never get better, that he would never be active again.

So as I was visiting him one day at his bedside, he said to me, "Pat, you only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough." I'm sure he had regrets, but there wasn't a day that Gramps didn't live to the fullest in the best way he knew how. And the best way he knew how was to include Jesus.

If you *live* each day that you are alive, one need never wish that they were younger. I don't long for my 20's or my 30's or my 40's. For better or worse, I already did that gig. God is offering me and my wife, Jan, ever increasing life that won't end with our last breath here. We are now empty nesters and miss our kids. But we are new grandparents and my dad was right, "It just don't get better than that."

Our life will not be without challenges. My dad is 91 and recovering from his second stroke. My mom is in her fourth year with diagnosed Alzheimer's. We're transitioning from care of children to care of parents and, if the good Lord gives us the years, that will transition to our children caring for us.

But in all of that we find life. God, the author of life, designed us with that hunger that only he can fill. He surrounds us with our loved ones. He gave himself at the cross and he offers himself at the altar. He gives himself to us in every minute of every day and calls us to share that gift with each other. Our hungry search will include joy and tragedy, but always God is there with us. Remember he is the God that put on our skin so he could experience that hunger, trial and joy with us. Why? Just because he loves us.

Be hungry. Come and receive Jesus. Share in each other. Be alive...now and forever.