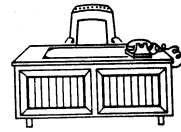


The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

June 14, 2020



From the Desk of
Fr. Romanus

Dear Parishioners,

Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ:

This Sunday is the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, which commemorates the institution of the Holy Eucharist. The solemnity was *Corpus Christi* prior to Vatican II. In the official Calendar, the Church celebrates it on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. However, in countries where it is not a day of obligation (as in The United States), it is usually celebrated on the Sunday following Trinity Sunday.

Church historians attribute the origin of this solemnity to an Augustinian Nun, Juliana of Liege, who had a vision of the Church in the form of a full moon with a dark spot that signified the absence of such a solemnity. She revealed her vision to various members of the Church's hierarchy and within a year, the Church celebrated the solemnity for the first time.

Pope Urban IV extended the celebration to the Universal Church in a Papal Bull entitled *Tansiturus* (1264). At the Pope's request, St. Thomas Aquinas (the Angelic Doctor) composed the hymn *Tantum Ergo*, dedicated to this celebration. Pope Clement V took up the issue again at the General Council of Vienna in 1311, which mandated its adoption. He also published a new decree on the solemnity that included sections from Pope Urban IV.

The Church's liturgical life revolves around the Eucharist. Vatican II states that the Eucharist is the 'source and summit' of the Christian life (*Lumen Gentium*, 11). Likewise, the Catechism teaches that the Eucharist is the 'sum and summary' of our faith (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1327). Participating in the Eucharistic banquet fulfills Jesus' divine intention where he states: "He who eats My Flesh and Drinks My Blood will abide in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). Through the eyes of faith, we come to appreciate the sanctifying gift of the body and blood of Christ in the appearance of bread and wine.

Recall that our parish was "Corpus Christi" before the merger. This would have been our feast day. As part of the merger, the feast day of our parish was moved to November 26, the feast of Christ the King.

The second reading reminds me of my priestly ordination twenty-five years ago last month. I spent time reflecting on this passage from First Corinthians and used it as my "motto" on the holy card handed out to people. In this passage (1 Cor 10:16-17), St. Paul invites us to ponder the mystery of the Eucharist as a source of unity for the community of believers. George Floyd's death in the hands of the police and the violent protests in the aftermath expose the enormous crack in the fabric of our nation. As race threatens to tear us apart, our celebration of the Eucharist serves as a source of unity.

St. Paul argues that because the loaf is one, we though many, are one body. It is an invitation to strive for unity while respecting our differences. There is more that unites us than separates us. People who are insecure tend to derive joy from putting others down. By the same token, violence does not accomplish anything meaningful. Protesting injustice is most effective when carried out in a peaceful non-violent manner. The taking of human life is antithetical to the gospel message as is the random destruction of people's lives and livelihood.

The gospel underscores our belief that the bread and wine we receive is truly the body and blood of Christ. This belief is the reason for our "Amen" in response to the communion minister. Jesus was unequivocal about the role the Eucharist plays in our salvation. He says, "Amen, Amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you." The question is, why do some deprive themselves of this sacrament?

Have a great weekend!

Fr. Romanus