

**Jesus is the source of life and nourishment – The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020. (Deut. 8:2-3, 14-16, 1Cor. 10:16-17, John 6:51-58)**

Today we celebrate the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, also called Corpus Christi. The church sets aside Thursday or Sunday after the feast of the Holy Trinity for this feast. The Church wants to tell us that by participating in the Eucharist, the believer participates in the life of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the day the church asks us to reflect solely on the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist, the fundamental mystery of our faith, the greatest of all the sacraments, which is Christ himself. This is affirmed by the Church's teaching, when she says, the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Church's life.

Corpus Christi is a feast that strengthens our faith in Jesus' real presence in the Eucharist. His presence in the Eucharist means abundance of life and nourishment. Jesus' presence in the Eucharist feeds and nourishes us. His presence in the Eucharist also reminds us that he is with us always. I hear people who don't go to church say, of course Jesus is always with us whether we go to church or not. That is true, but Jesus is especially with us in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. So, if you miss participating in the Eucharist, you are also missing a very profound experience of being united with your God. This union with your God through your participation in the Eucharist is a gift that God is offering to us in this world.

The three readings for today's solemnity help us to reflect on the meaning of the Eucharist. The first reading from the book of Deuteronomy, speaks of manna as a gift of God that gave life to the people of Israel during their journey in the wilderness. In this text, Moses exhorts his people as they get ready to enter the

Promised Land. They are warned against forgetting the Lord when their hardships are over, and they enjoy the prosperity of the land. “When you have eaten your fill and you have built fine houses, do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God.” (Deut.8:12). Moses was reminding them that the God who has fed them with manna from heaven was worthy of their worship and loyalty.

Dear friends, it is interesting that when Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Jesus used a passage from our first reading today to overcome the devil. When Jesus was hungry because of fasting, Satan commanded him to turn stones into loaves of bread. Jesus replied with a phrase from verse 3 of today’s first reading: “Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” It is always a temptation to seek the tangible bread of this earth rather than spiritual bread of heaven. Yet the Eucharist as food for our spirits is far more important than bread for our bodies. The source of our spiritual nourishment is Jesus who feeds us with his body and blood.

In our Gospel from John, Jesus calls himself the living bread, which came down from Heaven. Jesus compares himself to the manna which the Jews gathered each morning in the wilderness. But Jesus draws a contrast: those who ate the manna still suffered and died but those who eat his body and drink his blood will live forever. Christ is appealing to us to allow him to satisfy the deepest hunger of our souls, by receiving him as living bread from heaven.

The word “communion” which we usually use for the Eucharist is probably received from Paul in our 2<sup>nd</sup> reading today. Paul teaches that it is through the Eucharist that one has communion with Christ. Paul says, “The bread we break, is it not a “communion” (Greek “koinonia”) in the Body of Christ. Our

participation in the communion reveals to us that Jesus alone is the source our sustenance. As followers of Jesus Christ, may we become more like Him through our frequent partaking of the one bread. **Amen.**

**By Fr. Emmanuel Subaar**