

**Homily Notes for “The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) (June 23, 2019). (Gn 14:18-20; I Cor 11:23-26; Lk 9:11b-17)**

**1. Importance of this feast:**

- a) *Corpus Christi* is the celebration of the abiding presence of a loving God as *Emmanuel* – God-with-us – in order to give collective thanks to our Lord for his living with us in the Eucharist.
- b) The feast also gives us an occasion to learn more about the importance and value of the “Real Presence” so that we may appreciate it and better and receive maximum benefit from the Sacrament.
- d). This feast can help us to prepare rightly for the reception of the Holy Eucharist by having examined ourselves and have repented of our sins.
- e. In this year’s readings we can focus more deeply on the priesthood of Christ.

**2. We believe in the “Real Presence” of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist because**

- a) Jesus promised it after miraculously feeding the 5000.
- b) Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist during his Last Supper.
- c) Jesus commanded his disciples to repeat it in his memory.

**3. We explain the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist by:** the Aristotelian philosophical term “transubstantiation” which means that the *substance* of the consecrated bread and wine is changed to the *substance* of the risen Jesus’ glorified Body and Blood by the action of the Holy Spirit, while its *accidents* (like color, shape, taste etc.), remain the same.

**4. Scripture lessons:** This year's readings emphasize the theme of the priesthood of Jesus.

**5. Today’s first reading** describes how the priest-king Melchizedek offered a thanksgiving-sacrifice of bread and wine to God for the welfare of the patriarch Abraham and in response to his remarkable victory over the five kings. In response Abraham gave him a tithe of everything. This event also prefigured the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Priest-King, Jesus

**6. This is reflected upon in Hebrews ch 7** in which Melchizedek is presented as a type of Christ. It also explains how Jesus Christ is both King and Priest, for by the lineage of David Jesus is only a king. Melchizedek was king of Salem (Jerusalem). It is also as a sign of thanksgiving for Jesus’ victory won over sin and death.

**7. Note how it is also related to the giving (tithing) of the faithful** in imitation of Abraham. This is also referenced in Ps 110:4, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (not Aaron nor the Levites). If Abraham gave his tithes to Melchizedek who was greater than Father Abraham, how much more should we want to give ourselves, time, talent, and treasure to him who is greater than Melchizedek, that is Jesus Christ.

**8. In defending the faith,** note that Catholics have a priest (who offers sacrifice). Protestants usually have pastors or ministers but not priests. They do not claim to offer sacrifices. Note also that the Blessed Virgin Mary is not a sacrifice, nor does she offer sacrifices. She only intercedes.

**9. In the second reading,** St. Paul gives the earliest account of what Jesus said and did during the last meal he celebrated with his followers, interpreting it as a sacrifice. It is unfortunate that the reading ends at v. 26 and does not continue on to complete the thought with v. 34. Vv 27 -32 are a warning not to take the Eucharist unworthily; that is, if one is in serious sins.

Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are ill and infirm, and a considerable number are dying. If we discerned

ourselves, we would not be under judgment; but since we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world”(1 Cor 11:27-32).

**10. Jesus also says,**

“Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Matt 5:23-24).

This shows why people who take the Eucharist seriously get along better and more successfully than those who do not. I am concerned for the number of us who seem to come to Eucharist not really prepared or reconciled and therefore cannot receive the Body and Blood of the Lord, but can only receive a blessing. If you are not adequately prepared to receive the Eucharist at Mass, would you have any assurance of going to heaven?

**11. Today’s Gospel** describes Jesus’ miraculous feeding of five thousand people by multiplying five loaves of bread and two fish. Theologically, this feeding is a prefiguring of Jesus’ gift of the Eucharistic bread that would spiritually nourish those who believe in him.

**12. How important is it to receive the Eucharist at least weekly? A recent experience at a wedding.**

**13. What does our Lord say about the Eucharist and how often we should receive it?**

**First**, in every account of the Last Supper, Jesus speaks in imperative terms. “Do this in remembrance of me.” This is a command, not a suggestion. When we don’t do it and we should be doing it, we would be in disobedience to God.

**Second**, in describing its importance in John 6 Jesus 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. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

**14. Consequently**, how often **must** we do this to be right with God? It would be every Lord’s Day, that is once a week on Sunday which is what the Commandment requires and that which our Tradition indicates.

**15. The conclusion we must come to** is that we must be receiving the Lord every week, at least. Better if we do it during the week, or even daily.

**16. This is why we are going in Procession with the Eucharist in front of us**, singing and with bells ringing. That indicates how important it is to honor the Eucharist in our lives.

**17. This is why I am concerned for those not right with God who come with arms crossed, able only to receive a blessing.** Is that adequate to “have life within me?” If you were to die in the night of the day when you were not able to receive the Eucharist, could you have confidence that you would be saved? How important is it to be right with God and have our lives in order? Let us realize that there are reasons not to receive, good reasons, not just mortal sin.

**18. Is this day, this message, a time to evaluate carefully our whole lives before God?** What do I need to do to put things in order? Confession and repentance from a certain sin? Do I need to resolve some problem with someone, forgiving them so that I can be forgiven (Matt 6:14-15)? What would it take to get my marriage in order?

**19. How wonderful and powerful is God as He comes to me through the Eucharist? How important is it to get my life in order so as to benefit from it?**