

Solemnity of The Body and Blood of Christ – 14th June 2020

The Feast of Corpus Christi goes back nearly 800 years to the time of St Thomas Aquinas – who heard of a Eucharistic miracle in a church in Bolsena, Italy, where the consecrated host began to bleed onto the corporal cloth (this corporal and the blood can still be seen in the cathedral at Orvieto). St Thomas is supposed to have investigated this miracle and urged Pope Urban IV to institute the Feast of Corpus Christi. Again this miracle is supposed to be the result of the priest who was celebrating the Mass at the time, having doubts about the doctrine of transubstantiation – and that the miracle became the Truth for him of the fact that during the consecration at Mass Jesus becomes Real and Truly Present in the form of bread and wine – that through the prayers of the priest and the Presence of the Holy Spirit the bread and wine become Jesus Christ's Body and Blood – that God in a unique way is Present to us on the altar of sacrifice.

Just as an aside, St Thomas Aquinas wrote the Pange Lingua hymn to honour this feast of Corpus Christi – of which the last two stanza are the Tantum Ergo, that we sing at Benediction.

St Paul in this letter today reminds us that for nearly 2000 years, since the Last Supper, we have been celebrating Christ truly present to us in bread and wine, 'The Blessing cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ, and the bread we break is a communion with the body of Christ.' St John in the Gospel today reminds us of the wonder, beauty and power of the Presence of Christ in the bread and wine, for Jesus himself says, 'I am the living bread which comes down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.'

Jesus did not just come into the world for thirty three years and then leave us to our own devices – He continually comes into the world to bring Life, for, 'Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life,' and that they will, 'live in me and I will live in them.' What an amazing promise, that not only do we live in God but that God will dwell with in us, and that this happens in a unique and real way through receiving Holy Communion, The Eucharist: at that point we are a living tabernacle. This Real Presence of Jesus within does not cease with the digestive process of course, but continues with our prayer life and acts of charity and love towards our fellow human beings. Therefore, on this feast of Corpus Christi we as Christians and in particular as Catholics should have a heightened awareness of God's love, not just for ourselves, but for the whole of humanity, for as Jesus says, 'My flesh (is) for the life of the world.' So, it is for us who eat and drink of the flesh and blood of Christ to ensure that the life of Christ becomes real and tangible for all who we meet, and especially for all those who are oppressed or marginalised in the world.

As the saying goes, 'you and me, may be the only bible that some people will read,' so lets us be sure that through the leaves of our lives people may read and see Christ truly present in our words and actions. We have the most wonderful opportunity (outside of this pandemic) to be fully nourished on God Himself through Word and Sacrament – therefore we are the most fortunate of people, for who else and which other religion is able to say that God comes into their lives so profoundly and so intensely that God 'stands in our midst' and in His humbleness allows Himself to be consumed by His creature in order to bring that creature to true life and divinity.

Corpus Christi reminds us of our participation in the perfect relationship with the Holy Trinity and therefore with Humanity as a whole - for why else would God humble Himself to dwell in mere bread and wine if not to bring a real and heightened dignity to his beloved creatures, you and me. Let us honour this beautiful privilege by fully loving God and the people of the world – let us stand together in solidarity with

those who have limited justice and dignity in their lives, just as God stands in solidarity with you and me in our limitedness, through His Body and Blood present here today on the altar of sacrifice.

Bidding Prayers

Let us pray for Pope Francis and our Church, that we may always have Christ at the centre of our lives and living.

Lord hear us

Let us pray for our world, that people will always seek justice and mercy for all.

Lord hear us

Let us pray for all those suffering today, may the love of Christ be a real and felt comfort today and all days.

Lord hear us

Let us pray for equality for all people around the world, especially for at this time for those of the Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities.

Lord hear us

Let us pray for those who are suffering economically at the moment.

Lord hear us

Let us pray for our children and young people, may they come to know a more peaceful and caring world now and in the future.

Lord hear us

We pray for the Holy Soul... Eternal rest

Hail Mary...