**DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE**
1408 Carmel Drive
Lafayette, Louisiana 70501-5215
Telephone: 337.261.5614 Fax: 337.261.5603

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

# Pastoral Letter on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord

*(To be read at all masses June 18th & June 19th, 2022 by order of the Most Reverend Bishop)*

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Church celebrates this weekend the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord. The celebration invites us to reflect on that most precious gift given to us by Our Savior Jesus Christ, the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist. In the Eucharist, the promise of Jesus that He would always be with us until the close of the ages is fulfilled. The Eucharist was instituted by Our Lord when, seated with His apostles at the Last Supper, He took bread and wine and said, "This is my body, this is my blood, do this in memory of me". In the Eucharist we are changed and become the food we eat. Jesus told the crowds after the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, "You should be looking for true food, my own body and blood. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life and I will raise him up on the last day."

The Holy Eucharist is a sacrament and a sacrifice in which the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ is contained, offered and received. A sacrament is an outward sign that contains a true reality. Bread and wine are the outward sign which when the words of Jesus are pronounced by the priest become the true body and blood of the Lord. The Eucharist is a sacrifice because the whole redemptive work of Jesus Christ, His life, His perfect obedience to the will of the Father, His suffering, death on the cross, resurrection and ascension are made present on the altar and offered to God the Father. In His presence on the altar, we are joined to Him to give the most perfect worship to God and atonement for our sins. He is the perfect Lamb of God offered for our sins.

Jesus Christ is truly present under the form of bread and wine. The complete Jesus is present under the form of bread and completely present under the form of wine. We receive His body and blood when we receive Holy Communion. It is our spiritual nourishment and the pledge of our everlasting life.

On this solemnity, let us all renew our love and devotion to Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist. We should assist at mass as often as possible, most especially on all Sundays, the Lord's Day. Many of the faithful have a devotion to daily mass. Why not stop and make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament in Church sometimes and spend quite time with Jesus present in the tabernacle. The Church has many devotions to the Eucharist: Benediction, Eucharistic processions, praying the rosary before the tabernacle and more.

The beautiful prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas highlights this great treasure that is ours as Catholics: "O holy banquet in which Christ is received, the memory of His passion is renewed, the soul is filled with grace and there is given to us the pledge of everlasting life."

With every good wish, I am

Faithfully yours in Christ,

+J. Douglas Deshotel

Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel, D.D.
Bishop of Lafayette

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