

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

June 22, 2025

Today's feast of the Body and Blood of Jesus is celebrated all over the world with processions, Eucharistic adoration, and songs. It is fitting because today we celebrate the greatest gift given to the world - The Body and Blood of Jesus Christ which we receive at every Mass.

The only other day that focuses on the Eucharist is Holy Thursday. But because that takes place during Holy Week when we are commemorating the death of Jesus, the mood is more somber and restrained. It is good that we have today's solemnity to celebrate in a more joyful way.

This feast is especially important because it gives us the opportunity to repeat a central truth of our faith. That the Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. It is not a mere symbol, but the real thing. At every Mass it is the true Body and the true Blood of the Risen Jesus that is given to us. Nothing less.

And since we have a real, intimate encounter with Jesus in Holy Communion, it makes sense that it will have a profound effect on us. During His time on earth, Jesus never failed to change in one way or another the people He came in contact with. In the same way, Jesus continues to transform everyone who receives Him with faith in the Blessed Sacrament. And so, today's readings invite us to reflect on what some of those effects are in the lives of faithful Mass goers.

First of all, receiving Jesus in the Eucharist should make us generous. Jesus is generous with us. In giving us His Body and Blood, He is giving us everything He is. If we receive Him every Sunday, then we should be inspired and empowered to imitate His generosity with others. Jesus expects nothing less from us.

Consider today's first reading. It takes place in the Book of Genesis. After Abraham wins a major battle, he goes to give thanks to the high priest of Salem, Melchizedek, who offers a sacrifice of bread and wine. There is no doubt that this is an early preparation for the Eucharist. What does Abraham do afterwards? He gives Melchizedek a tenth of his wealth. Abraham was a very wealthy man, so we know it had to be a very valuable gift.

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This is where the whole idea of tithing comes about. A person giving ten percent of their gross income in thanksgiving for all that the Lord has provided to them, five percent to the church and five percent to other charities.

Why is that so important? Because God has been so generous with us and He wants us to pass on to others the blessings He has given us. That is one of the great lessons of the Eucharist. We receive all that God has given us with gratitude. Then we turn around and share it with others so that it will be a blessing to them. And then we have space to receive even more blessings from God. In that way, we become a means by which God can bless others. We can be generous because we trust that our Heavenly Father will provide for all our needs.

Jesus teaches us this second lesson in today's gospel about the multiplication of loaves and fishes. There is no doubt that this story is meant to teach us something about the Eucharist and its effect in our lives. St Luke begins the story by telling us that Jesus had been preaching about the Kingdom of God. That Kingdom of God was a reality that Jesus was bringing to the world - a reality where there would be enough for everyone. That is why, when the apostles tell Jesus to send the crowds away, He refuses and tells them to feed the crowds themselves. To the apostles, what they had seemed like too little for themselves, never mind for such a great number of people. But Jesus reassures them that it is enough. If they give it rather than try to keep it for themselves, then God will be able to create a miracle. And that is exactly what happened.

That is the lesson of the Eucharist. Something as small and ordinary as bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ when we offer them to God. Just so, the little that we have can feed many people if we give it away. God wants to work a miracle for the world through us. But for that to happen, we have to be generous. It may seem like we have too little to give to meet the needs of so many. But if we give it, God will multiply it. And there will be plenty left over.

So, it is not enough for us to profess our faith in Jesus' real presence in the Eucharist. We have to let it transform us. We have to learn the lesson of the Eucharist that

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our life is meant to be a gift given to others. Just as Jesus gives Himself completely to us, we are called to love others through a gift of ourselves. Then the Eucharist will not just be a miracle we celebrate on Sunday, but a way of life for us.