

Homily for the Feast of THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST [C] (June 22 2025

Readings:- Gen 14: 18-20, I ,Cor 11: 23-26, Lk, 9: 11-17

My dear brothers and Sisters in Christ;

First of all let us reflect on the Importance of this feast day:- 1) The last two precious gifts given to us by Jesus are the Holy Eucharist as our spiritual food on Holy Thursday and Jesus' mother Mary as our spiritual mother on Good Friday 2) *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. 3) The feast also gives us an occasion to learn more about the importance and value of the “*Real Presence*” on Jesus — body and blood, soul and Divinity under the appearances of bread and wine — so that we may appreciate the Sacrament better and receive maximum benefit from the Eucharist

We believe in the “Real Presence” of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist because1) Jesus promised it after miraculously feeding the 5000. 2) Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist during his Last Supper. 3) Jesus commanded his disciples to repeat it in his memory. 4) “*Nothing is impossible for God.*”

We explain the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist by: “*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, and its *accidents* (like colour, shape, taste etc.), remain the same.

The Blessing Cup: Leonardo da Vinci was 43 years old when the Duke of Milan asked him to paint the Last Supper. He worked on it slowly and with meticulous attention to detail. He spent much time making the cup that Jesus held as beautiful as possible. After three years he was ready to show it, and he called a friend to come and see it. He said, “*Look at it and give me your opinion.*” The friend said, “*It is wonderful. The cup is so real I cannot take my eyes of it!*” Immediately, Leonardo took a brush and drew it across the sparkling cup. He exclaimed as he did so: “*Nothing shall detract from the figure of Christ!*” — Christ must be the primary focus of a Christian's life. (*John Rose in John's Sunday Homilies; quoted by Fr. Botelho*).

Important lessons from the scripture readings of the day:- Today's Scripture readings contain three themes: the Eucharist as blessing or praise of God (action of Melchizedek in Gn 14:18-20), the Eucharist as memorial of what Jesus did at the Last Supper (1 Cor 11:23-26) and the Eucharist as food for the multitudes (Lk 9:11b-17). The never-ending supply of bread with which Jesus fed the multitude prefigured his own Body, the consecrated Bread that sustains us until he comes again. The Eucharist is also a re-enactment of Christ's sacrificial Self-giving. The Jews offered animal sacrifices to God, believing that life was in the blood, and the animal blood was a substitute for human lifeblood. Following this Jewish tradition, Jesus offered his own lifeblood as a substitute for the lifeblood of all human beings and, so, sealed the New Covenant made between God and humankind (1 Cor 11:25), bringing new life to the world. The *Corpus Christi* readings remind us of Jesus' offering of his Body and Blood which serves in the Church as a lasting memorial of His saving death for us. We renew Jesus' Covenant by participating in the banquet of his Body and Blood, a banquet that, through his death, gives us life.

So my dear brothers and Sisters , this feast of the corpus Christi invites us today to receive this message of unity and sacrificial love:

The Eucharist, (the Body and Blood of Christ), teaches us the importance of community, the bond that results from this sacrifice. John Chrysostom says: *"What is the Bread actually? The Body of Christ. What do communicants become? The Body of Christ. Just as the bread comes from many grains, which remain themselves and are not distinguished from one another because they are united, so we are united with Christ."* Just as numerous grains of wheat are pounded together to make the host, and many grapes are crushed together to make the wine, so we become unified in this sacrifice. Our Lord chose these elements in order to show us that we ought to seek union with one another, to allow the Holy Spirit to transform us into Our Lord Jesus Christ and to work with Him in the process. Christ is the Head and we are the Body. Together we are one. That which unites us is our willingness to sacrifice our time and talents to God in our fellow members in Christ's Mystical Body. This is symbolized by our sharing in the same Bread and the same Cup. Hence, Holy Communion should strengthen our sense of unity and love.

02) As we celebrate this great feast of Faith, let us worship what St. Thomas Aquinas did not hesitate to call, *"the greatest miracle that Christ ever worked on earth ."*..... *My Body My Blood"*. Before the greatness of this mystery, let us exclaim with St. Augustine, *"O Sacrament of*

devotion! O Sign of unity! O Bond of charity!" Let us also repeat St. Thomas Aquinas' prayer of devotion in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament: *"O Sacrament most holy! O Sacrament Divine! All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine!"*

Additional information:- The feast and its objectives: Today, we celebrate the solemn feast of *Corpus Christi*. It is three feasts in one: the feast of the Eucharistic sacrifice, feast of the Sacrament of the Eucharist and the feast of the Real Presence of Jesus. It is a doctrinal feast established for three purposes: 1) to give God collective thanks for Christ's abiding presence with us in the Eucharist and to honour him there; 2) to instruct the people in the Mystery, Faith and devotion surrounding the Eucharist, and 3) to teach us to appreciate and make use of the great gift of the Holy Eucharist, both as a Sacrament and as a sacrifice. In the three-year cycle of the Sunday liturgy, there is a different theme each year for this *Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ*. In Cycle A the theme is the Eucharist as our food and drink; in Cycle B the emphasis is on the Eucharist as the sign of the covenant; and in Cycle C the focus is on the priesthood of Jesus. Although we celebrate the institution of the Holy Eucharist on Holy Thursday, the Church wants to emphasize its importance by a special feast, formerly called "*Corpus Christi*." It was Pope Urban IV who first extended the feast to the universal Church. This is one of the few feasts left in which we observe a procession and a sung "*Sequence*."

The historical development: Today's celebration of the Body and Blood of the Lord originated in the Diocese of Liege in 1246 as the feast of *Corpus Christi*. In the reforms of Vatican II, *Corpus Christi* was joined with the feast of the Precious Blood (July 1) to become the *Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord*. We celebrate today Christ's gift of the Eucharist, the source and summit of our life together as the Church. The Council of Trent (1545 to 1563) declared that we must honour Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist publicly so that those who observed the Faith of Catholics in the Most Holy Eucharist might be attracted to the Eucharistic Lord and believe in the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, present in this great Sacrament. *"The Catholic Church teaches that in the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of the God-man are really, truly, substantially, and abidingly present together with his soul and divinity by reason of the Transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. This takes place in the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass"* (Council of Trent, 1551; CCC # 1374, note 200)

The Biblical foundation: Our belief in this Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist derives from the literal interpretation of the promise of Christ to give us his Body and Blood for our spiritual food and drink, as found in St. John's Gospel, Chapter 6, and also in the four independent accounts of the fulfilment of this promise at the Last Supper (Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14: 22-25; Lk 22: 14-20; 1 Cor 11:23-25). Eucharistic theologians explain the *Real Presence* by a process called *transubstantiation*: the entire *substance* of bread and wine is changed into the entire *substance* of the risen and glorified Body and Blood of Christ, retaining only the "*accidents*" (taste, colour, shape) of bread and wine. Can there be a religion in which God is closer to man than our Catholic Christianity? Jesus does not believe that he is humiliating himself in coming to us and giving himself to us in his Flesh and Blood; rather, he is expressing his everlasting love for us.

Additional anecdotes:-01) The Eucharistic piety that converted St. Elizabeth Ann Seton: Two hundred years ago, a beautiful, young, Episcopalian woman accompanied her husband, a merchant, to Italy, leaving four of their five children at home with family members. They had sailed for Italy, hoping that the change in climate might help her husband, whose failing business had eventually affected his health adversely. Tragically, he died in Livorno. The grieving young widow was warmly received by an Italian family, business acquaintances of her deceased husband. She stayed with them for three months before she could arrange to return to America. The young widow was very impressed by the Catholic faith of her host family, especially their devotion to the Holy Eucharist: their frequent attendance at Mass, the reverence with which they received Holy Communion, the awe they showed toward the Blessed Sacrament on feast days when the Eucharist was carried in procession. She found her broken heart healed by a hunger for this mysterious presence of the Lord, and, upon returning home, requested instruction in Catholic Faith. Soon after being received into the Church, she described her first reception of the Lord in the Eucharist as the happiest moment of her life. — It was in St. Peter's Square on September 14, 1975, that Pope Paul VI canonized this woman, Elizabeth Ann Seton, as the first native-born saint of the United States. The Eucharist for her was a sign and cause of union with God and the Church

Joke of the week:- The Catholic's general knowledge about the Bible and the Messiah: A Sunday school teacher was telling the students of how the walls of Jericho came down amazingly by the blowing of trumpets and shouts of the people. Observing that Johnny was day-dreaming, the teacher asked him: "Johnny who knocked down the walls of

Jericho?" Johnny started shouting furiously, "I didn't do it, I didn't do it!" and he ran from the class in protest. That evening the teacher met his parents in the park and spoke to Johnny's mother. She told her the story of what happened in the class and about Johnny's unreasonable outburst in the class. His mother said, "If my son said he didn't do it, then he didn't do it! I trained him not to tell lies." The perplexed teacher asked Johnny's mother if she could speak to the boy's father. When she explained the incident to him he said: "Let's not fuss about this. Just tell me how much it will cost to repair the walls and I'll write a check."

"O Sacrament most holy! O Sacrament Divine! All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine!"