

Commentary on the Readings for June 18, 2017

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (*Corpus Christi*)

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of the *Body and Blood of Christ*, which, in years past, was known by its Latin name *Corpus Christi*. It is fitting that we should celebrate this divine gift to mankind right after the Easter Season because it was as a result of the events of the first Easter that Jesus gave us something to remember Him by. However, "*Do this in remembrance of me*" means more than an occasional mental recognition of this great gift. It is recognizing that the Body and Blood of Christ is the sustaining food for our souls in our journey through life. Let us see how the Readings support this.

In the **First Reading** from the *Book of Deuteronomy (8:2-3, 14-16)*, we hear the voice of Moses reminding the Israelites of how God provided for them in a "howling desert" during a testing period to see if they would remain faithful to Him. God gave them "food from heaven" called manna; but at the same time, Moses admonishes them to remember that there are things more important than food for the body. Faith and obedience will get *us* further than a loaf of bread!

In the **Responsorial Psalm (147:12-20)**, we hear the psalmist praising God for His many gifts and benevolence to the Israelites throughout a long period of Salvation History. We are also the beneficiaries of these same gifts, but through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ these gifts continue to nourish us in a spiritual way that will last forever, if we understand and accept them as gifts to sustain the spiritual life within us.

In the **Second Reading** from St. Paul's *First Letter to the Corinthians (10:16-17)*, we hear Paul preaching to his congregation that when we partake of the Body and Blood of Christ we become as family. If we believe that what we are doing is following the command of Christ at the Last supper, then doesn't that make us spiritually related? When we come together to enjoy the American Thanksgiving Day Dinner, we don't come just to eat turkey. We come to enjoy the fellowship of family and friends that bring us closer together. Our receiving of the Body and Blood of Christ at Mass should also bring the congregation closer together where we would not think of leaving before the Mass is over. Would you leave the Thanksgiving Day table before the dinner was over? If you did, think of how your host or hostess would feel!

In the **Gospel Reading** from the *Gospel of John (6:51-58)*, we hear Jesus tell His apostles and us, emphatically, that the bread and wine consecrated at Catholic Mass is the same Body and Blood that hung on the cross for us. It is also the food for our souls and without it our souls would die. Unlike the bread that Moses gave his followers in the desert, Jesus gives us something far greater. This divine bread will sustain us on our journey back to the Father.

Many people come to Mass every Sunday and receive the Body and Blood of Christ, *Corpus Christi*, but do they really understand what they are receiving? St. Paul tells us to take this seriously, that to receive this great gift unworthily could lead to condemnation (See **1 Cor. 11:27-29**). However, let us look on the brighter side. Coming closer to Jesus Christ, the fountain of love, should make us spiritually fulfilled and happy. Do you take Communion seriously? Are you spiritually happy and at peace? Give it some thought during your Prayer Time this week!

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