

Homily June 22/23, 2019

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

How do you think the disciples felt when they hear Christ tell them to “Give them some food yourselves” when they knew they only had five loaves and two fish? I am sure they were thinking that this is barely even enough for the thirteen of us to eat. I can just visualize them thinking, “No way would this small amount of food be enough to feed the more than five thousand gathered that day. What was Jesus thinking?” The Gospel notes that the men numbered five thousand, so the actual number of people gathered to hear Christ speak was much more than the five thousand noted in the Gospel, when you include the many women and children who were also present.

The disciples had just seen Jesus perform miracles of healing, but how soon they forgot about the abundance of God’s blessings and that Jesus knew these few fish and a couple of loaves would be more than enough to feed the multitudes gathered on the hillsides. The last sentence in the Gospel reading stated that the leftover fragments filled twelve baskets which symbolized the Twelve Tribes of Israel. More than enough food was provided so that no one was hungry after being fed that day long ago and enough was left over to continue to feed many.

The miracle performed by Jesus that day foreshadowed the Sacrament of the Eucharist which He instituted at the Last Supper in the Upper Room. This Sacrament was also referenced by St. Paul in today’s second reading in his letter to the Corinthian’s. St. Paul’s account in 1st Corinthians even predated the first Gospels since it was recorded during Paul’s time with the Church of Corinth from 54-57 AD., so it was actually the first written record of Christ’s establishment of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

We recall both of these events when we actively participate in Holy Communion during each Mass. We are all physically fed with Christ’s body and blood after we receive at Holy Communion, but are we spiritually fed? “Do this in remembrance of me”. Do we really mean “Amen” when we receive the precious body and blood of Christ? Do we really believe that the bread and wine are truly changed into Christ’s body and blood in the Eucharist? We call this action, Transubstantiation or Trans – substance, the substance is transformed while still maintaining its external appearance of bread and wine. By our saying “Amen” after receiving,

we are verbally and outwardly stating that “Yes, I do believe that this is truly Christ’s Body and Blood in the Eucharist... not just a symbol.” As Catholics this is our faith. This is what we believe. (1376 Catechism of the Catholic Church)

Being spiritually fed by the Eucharist should mean that we have Christ in the center of our lives. Not just in the hour we spend each Sunday during mass, but every hour and every minute of every day. Do you let Jesus come into your heart at all times, or just when you want to ask a favor of Him? Have you knelt in silent prayer in front of Jesus in the monstrance in the Chapel during an Hour of Adoration or even just asked for Christ to open your heart to welcome a stranger into the church, or to assist others in need with your time, or by just being a shoulder to cry on or a set of listening and caring ears? Have you truly been Christ to one another? We have all had our hard times trying to be Christ to one another. I know I have. We all need to try harder to become Christ to each other in our daily, and not just our Sunday church hour lives.

To really be spiritually fed by the Eucharist we need to take Christ into our hearts, as well as our stomach, when we receive the Eucharistic meal. We need to realize the abundance of blessings that will flow from Christ if we are ready to accept Him each Sunday in the Eucharist and every day in our hearts. We just need to ask Him for His help in our lives and He will abundantly provide. Christ is the real food that truly satisfies our hearts and minds and souls, if we just let him enter into us.

The Eucharist constantly shows Jesus’ love for us. Jesus is the center of all time. Is He also the center of your day? Do you live each day with Jesus, your best friend? When you leave the church today, remember that you are carrying Jesus with you and you are entrusted to be Christ to one another. Remember the closing words of mass when the Deacon says “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.” We need to remember to glorify the Lord in All of our actions, words, and deeds.

May the joy and peace of the Lord be always with you.

Deacon Mark Bortle