

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST “A”  
JUNE 17/18, 2017

Who or what “feeds” me? Who or what gives meaning and purpose to my life? What is my real reason for being here at this moment? Is it for Jesus? Or is it about something or someone else? (*Pause.*) These are not idle questions. They are at the heart of this weekend’s liturgy honoring the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Pope Francis addressed similar questions in a Sunday noon Angelus message on August 16, 2015. “Regarding Holy Mass, one sometimes hears this objection: ‘Of what use is the Mass? I go to Church when I feel like it, and I pray better in solitude’. But the Eucharist is not a private prayer or a beautiful spiritual exercise, it is not a simple commemoration of what Jesus did at the Last Supper. We say, in order to fully understand, that the Eucharist is a ‘remembrance’, that is, a gesture which renders real and present the event of Jesus’ death and resurrection: the bread is his Body given up for us, the wine truly is his Blood poured out for us.

The Eucharist is Jesus himself who gives himself entirely to us. *Nourishing ourselves* of Him and *abiding* in Him through Eucharistic Communion, if we do so with faith, *transforms our life*, transforms it into a gift to God and to our brothers and sisters. Nourishing ourselves of that “Bread of Life” means entering into harmony with the heart of Christ, assimilating his choices, his thoughts, his behavior. It means entering into dynamism of love and becoming people of peace, people of forgiveness, or reconciliation, of sharing solidarity. The very things that Jesus did.”

As Catholics we believe, as Pope Francis states, that the sacraments instituted by Jesus through their outward physical properties, in the case of the Holy Eucharist ordinary bread and wine, transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit actually bring us into communion with the *real person of God in Jesus*. As Jesus speaks today in the Gospel of his being the bread and drink of life, he is inviting us through our sharing in these outward transformed signs to enter into, or into a further, deepened relationship with him.

But how do we grow this relationship with Jesus begun in the Holy Eucharist to continue to be “fed” by Jesus? Again, Pope Francis points to two ways: prayer and adoration.

Through prayer, Pope Francis states, a person “goes forward and immerses himself into the person of Christ”; praying for the grace “to know Christ.” A person comes to know Christ “through the Gospel. Christ “is present in the Gospel”. Pope Francis continues: “by reading the Gospel we know Christ. All of us do this, at least when we hear the Gospel when we go to Mass. Of course, we can also know Jesus “through the study of the catechism: the catechism teaches us who Christ is.’ All of this, however, is ‘not sufficient. In order to be able to understand Jesus we must enter into a context of prayer. We need to pray for this grace, Pope Francis states, “Father, send me your Spirit in order that I might know Christ.” A simple prayer such as this daily, opens the door for Jesus to enter into our lives. As we prepare to enter into the process of Evangelical Catholic, all of us have an invitation to come to know Jesus at a deeper level. I hope all of us will seriously consider becoming involved at some level.

Along with study and prayer Pope Francis speaks of the practice of adoration, specifically Eucharistic Adoration. Here at St. Cecilia’s for over twenty years we have had provided for us the opportunity to avail ourselves of a specified hour or a few minutes of silent meditation and contemplation in the Burke Chapel of the presence of the Eucharistic Jesus displayed on the altar. As a priest I find great strength, growth and peace in the time I spend before the exposed Blessed Sacrament. It deepens and prolongs the communion with Jesus experienced in the celebration of the Mass. I commend this practice of prayer to all of you. We are always looking for more people to commit themselves to time spent in prayer in the chapel.

Jesus tells us: “The one who feeds on me will have life because of me. Whoever eats this bread will live forever.” Pray God this be so for all of us.

Fr. Jim Secora