

CORPUS CHRISTI – 2021

Today we celebrate the Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord, and while the focus of the celebration is placed on the Sacramental Body and Blood of Christ in the Mass, we must remember that there is an indissoluble unity between the Incarnate Body of Jesus, his Sacramental Body and his Body the Church.

The Incarnate Jesus preached the gospel of repentance, announcing that the Kingdom of God was near. He was crucified and raised from the dead for our salvation, having commissioned the Church to be the body that manifested his visible presence on earth.

During the Last Supper Jesus spoke of himself as the Vine and the members of the Church as the branches. As he had done on the mountainside when he fed the crowds, he took bread, blessed it, broke and shared it saying, “This is my Body which will be given up for you. This is my Blood of the new and eternal covenant which will be poured out for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

This action of Jesus turned his brutal death into an act of sacrificial love through which heaven and earth have been reconciled so making it possible for human beings to share in the life of God and be agents of Jesus in the world. If Jesus’ words and actions during the Last Supper are not linked to his redemptive sacrifice on the Cross, the Catholic Mass is no more than a shared meal during which we talk of the love of God and each other. The mass is the re-presentation of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Our Lord, together with the empowerment of the Church through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The incarnate Christ and his Body the Church are united through his sacramental body and blood in which Christ is truly present. At the moment of his death, Jesus entrusted his mother to St John to be mother of the Church. When Jesus’ side was pierced on the cross, water and blood flowed from his side. The life of Jesus flows to us through the sacraments. Yet this life flowing *to* us must also flow *through* us out to the world.

When we receive the Blessed Sacrament during mass or adore his presence in the Tabernacle or displayed in a monstrance, we look back to his sacrifice on the cross and forward to the heavenly banquet in God’s presence when the Kingdom comes in its fulness. Our response to the sacramental gift of Christ’s Sacramental Body and Blood as members of Jesus’ Body the Church, must be to offer ourselves in self-giving love to grow God’s Kingdom.

So in giving thanks to God for the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ we thank God for his precious gift of himself in his incarnation, in his Sacramental presence and for his assurance that he is with us as his body on earth. Our response must be to renew our love for him and our sacrificial commitment to the life of faith and the ministries he calls us to undertake.

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