



THE NEW SHOFAR

This is my Body and this is my Blood

I am bread for feeding the world

Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi – Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ

In the light of the Gospel and two thousand years of Christian tradition and teaching, we believe Jesus is sacramentally present in the Eucharist. We do not believe the bread and wine become the flesh and blood of the Jesus who walked around Judea. We do not say “Body of Jesus” or “Blood of Jesus”. It is the Risen, Glorious and Reigning Christ who is sacramentally present. He is present in His glorified body, His body after the resurrection

We believe the glorified Christ is present, and when we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we receive Him, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity.

In our Sunday Eucharist we receive Christ in the proclamation of the Word (the readings), in our encounter with the other people, in the consecrated bread and wine that is His Body and Blood, and in the prayers and blessings. We do not go to church on Sunday just to receive the Holy Communion. God is doing far more for us than just the Communion.

We are called to continue living in Christ

Being a Christian is a little bit like yoga. We practice but never perfect every aspect of the Christian life. We need to be pushing ourselves deeper into the “position”. We develop an interior life through private and communal prayer and in the liturgy. We are called to perform works of charity and justice, which requires us to put our money where our mouths are by doing things in the real world that help others. We are to form our minds by paying attention to what the Church teaches, and through study of the Bible and theology. We are to receive the blessings of Christ through the sacraments. We are to be the Body of Christ in the world by participating with God, by following our Christian vocation to change the world and to shape it into the Kingdom of God, the kingdom of peace, justice and love.

Jesus is ***God-sent*** heavenly food, and this is the point to be pondering: whether or not we can believe God is feeding us for life’s journey in our Eucharistic celebration. John has already written how this life is first of all imparted through the waters of baptism where there is *life through water and the spirit*. This life-in-Christ needs to be sustained, maintained and strengthened and these things are done through the sacramental meal and in our gathering for the Eucharist.

John presents the Eucharist as being a witness to the Cross of Jesus, for the cross is the source

of our salvation. Jesus (the historical man) becomes the mediator of divine life as the Christ. Find Jesus and we find God. Live in Jesus and we live in God. Obey Jesus and imitate the life-witness of Jesus and we have life as God created it to be and wants it to be.

We are called to continue living in Christ

One great challenge of today's feast is to ponder the invitation of Jesus: *feed on me*. Unlike the metaphor of the *manna* where the Hebrew people ate of that food and still died, eating of the *flesh of the Son of Man* means the believer will live forever.

The stress from John, reflecting the teaching of Jesus, is on the believer accepting the full meaning of the saving death of Jesus on the cross. His focus remains on the importance of the faith of the individual believers. What Jesus is offering the world is a new form of life, a spiritual life with an eternal dimension. A life defined in terms of God and the divine will in creation. He teaches the possibility of a renewed, transformed way of being human in the world. A better way than the world could ever provide on its own.

Jesus declares He is the Bread of Life sent by the Father. He is a part of the divine plan intent on *feeding* the world. He is *life-giving-bread*, food here and now for all those who come to God in their hunger and believe in the God of love. In this Gospel Jesus has invited people to *believe in me* and now He explains belief as *eating of his flesh*.

What John is highlighting in his teaching on the Eucharist is the way God is giving life to the world through the sacrificial death of his Son on the cross, his *death for the life of the world*. Jesus does not simply reveal salvation. He does not just teach about salvation. He brings salvation. He gives salvation. Jesus *is* our life saving, God's life restoring gift.

As the Hebrew people during the Exodus struggled to believe in God's willingness and ability to feed them and to provide water, so too our world struggles to believe in a Jesus willing and able to feed them with the food of eternal life.

We are being fed for more than we are at the moment

The feast of Corpus Christi is a reminder that in offering us His body, Christ is also offering us the grace of unity that transcends our human ability to come to agreement. *Though many, we are one body*, Paul writes. And therein is our challenge for this coming week.

The moral challenge of this feast for a Church and our world which is aching with division is to reach across to those by whom we have been hurt, betrayed, confused, rejected, and claim them not only as our sister and brother, but as a member of the very same Body of Christ. This doesn't mean we can't disagree. We should, and we will. But somehow, as we do, we ought to hold in the forefront the primacy of unity in the Church, and not let those divisions define us. This is a tough challenge for humans. But at the table of the Eucharist, that which is too hard for us is made possible by the insurmountable love of God who loved us, who gave Himself for us, and who wanted us close to Him even while we were still enemies. The unity offered in the Eucharist is both a gift and a task. We ought not to neglect either.

It is in the Eucharist and all it means for us the future of our Church and parish is to be found.