

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ (June 2nd, 2024)

Today we celebrate the Holy Body and Blood of Christ – also called Corpus Christi. This honors, in a special way, the Body of Christ both in the Eucharist and in the Church. This great feast reminds us to stand with Christ, walk toward Him, and kneel in his holy presence (adoration, private prayers). As we receive the Lord in the Holy Eucharist today, let us REMEMBER, and let us ‘Give Thanks’.

Some people will go to great lengths to preserve the memory of another. We have monuments, museums, and memorial sites that dot our country, intended to preserve the memory of a worthy event or person. In today’s gospel (Mark 14: 12-26), we see another memorial which was given to us by the Lord Jesus himself so that we might remember his death and his love. It is not an elaborate or expensive memorial quite the contrary it is simple and practical.

Gospel of Mark: “On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus’ disciples asked him, “Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?” So, he sent two of his disciples, telling them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.” The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.” They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, “Surely you don’t mean me?” “It is one of the Twelve,” he replied, “one who dips bread into the bowl with me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.” While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. “This is my blood of the [a] covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them. “Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives”. (Mark 14: 12-26).

Importance of the Eucharist:

1) The last two precious gifts given to us by Jesus are the Holy Eucharist as our spiritual food on Holy Thursday and Jesus’ mother Mary as our spiritual mother on Good Friday

2) Corpus Christi is the celebration of the abiding presence of God in order to give thanks to our Lord for his living with us in the Eucharist.

The Gospel (Mark 14: 12-26) details how Jesus converted this ancient ritual of Passover into a Sacrament and sacrifice. Jesus offered his own Divine/human Body and Blood, and instead of sprinkling us with blood, Jesus put It into our hands as food and drink: “Take ... eat ... this IS my Body which will be given up for you” (He did not say “This represents my body”), and “Take ... drink ... This IS ... my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal Covenant, which will be poured out for you many.

As we receive the Eucharist, this could be a time to do these three things:

1. **A time to ‘Give Thanks’:** Another term used for Lord’s Supper is ‘Eucharist’ which is a Greek word meaning to give thanks. Express your thanks for what Jesus has done for you. Thanks, has a way of putting things in perspective. When we are thankful for what Jesus has done, it builds our relationship.
2. **A time to examine the self, and to Proclaim Christ.** I Corinthians 11: 28, “Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup”. Your partaking says something to others... I believe in Jesus; I am forgiven by Jesus; I believe Jesus is coming again. We are to be faithful in partaking until Jesus comes. This will be a time to examine your relationship with Jesus Christ. Not just time to confess sin but time to consider how you are doing in your walk.
3. **A time to remember:** The famous Dutch artist Rembrandt painted an interesting picture of the crucifixion of Jesus. It is a work which depicts the suffering of Jesus, the indifference of the soldiers, the sorrow of the women at the cross. But the most unusual aspect of the picture is that if you look closely, you will see that Rembrandt painted himself back in the shadows. This is what the Lord’s Supper does for us, it helps us see ourselves at the foot of the cross, to remember the suffering and death of Jesus on our behalf. We can come around this table in reverence, thanksgiving, humility, awe or we can come in indifference and pride. As you partake today, remember Jesus, remember all he had done for you, and give thanks for the forgiveness and renewal you can find in him.

The Eucharistic Jesus in the Tabernacle calls for our ***personal encounter, prayer and adoration***. Jesus waits for us, to fill our void, our emptiness, hunger and above all, to heal us. For us to pray well with others we need to learn to pray alone with the Lord.

Thank my God.

Thank you, Jesus, for the gift of the Holy Communion. AMEN.

Fr Martin Ezeihuaku, MSP.