

THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (CORPUS CHRISTI)

Today we celebrate God's precious gift to us in the Eucharist: The Body and Blood of Christ.

We all know about the importance of food and drink. All living things need food and water in order to stay alive. As human beings we derive our strength from a variety of food we eat.

In the first reading Moses told the people of Israel to remember the abundant blessings God manifested in bringing them out of Egypt and guiding them in the desert. In the midst of the affliction and hunger in the desert the Lord provided food unknown to their ancestors and brought out water from the rock.

As essential as food and drink were, and continue to be, Moses asserted that the manna should show them that such bread alone was not enough for their sustenance. They needed also to be sustained by God's life-giving words.

"Not by bread alone does one live but by every word that comes from the mouth of God".

Moses wanted them to know that God could also feed them without earthly materials. I will say that he did not want them to think only about their bodily growth but he wanted them to think also about their spiritual growth. He wanted them to distinguish between what gave life and what simply satisfied appetite.

Jesus in the gospel reading tells the Jewish people and us that we need more than manna; material food and drink in order to stay alive and have eternal life.

Today's Gospel comes from the last part of John's Eucharistic discourse in chapter six of his Gospel.

Chapter six of the Gospel of John opens with the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish. It is one of the most amazing miracles in the Gospel. Jesus performed it to prepare the people to understand a lesson he was to explain the next day at Capernaum. We could sum up Jesus' explanation captured in today's gospel reading as follows:

- 1) In the desert, God gave your ancestors manna to eat and water to drink.
- 2) But now, the food which my father offers you is my flesh and blood; is myself. Unless I become your food, you cannot reach the promised land.

For Jesus to eat his body and drink his blood is matter of life and death for anyone wishing to reach spiritual maturity and ultimately eternal life.

The Body and Blood of Christ is the core of the life of the Church. Right from the time of Christ up to now, it has been central and indispensable to the Church. At every Mass, Jesus' gift of himself to the Father on the cross is made present again sacramentally in the Eucharist and offered to us as our food for eternal life.

The importance of the Eucharist: the Body and Blood of Christ in our lives as Catholics can never be over-emphasized. It gives us spiritual strength. It contains all the goodness for the nourishment for our souls.

As eating the same food or from a common pot with fellow men and women makes us aware of the common bond of life so our reception of the Body and Blood of Christ unites us with Christ and our brothers and sisters.

Let us remember that our spiritual growth and our unity with Christ and one another are sustained by loving recognition of and the respect for the Body and Blood of Christ present in the consecrated bread and wine.

On this wonderful feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, let pray that we may continue to make the Eucharist the center of our lives and in doing so make Christ the center of our lives.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all fathers here a happy fathers' day celebration. It is my prayer that you will continue to provide both material and spiritual welfare for your sons and daughters all those under your paternal care.