

Corpus Christi - C
Genesis 14:18-20;
I Corinthians 11:23-26;
Luke 9:11b-17
Little Flower - 6/19/22

My Brothers and Sisters,

The staff and I want to wish all fathers a very blessed and happy Father's Day. Fathers, like mothers, play a critical role in the lives of their children. Thank you to all the fathers in our parish and all the men of our parish who assume a fatherly role in the lives of children.

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, commonly called Corpus Christi. Today also marks the beginning of the Eucharistic Revival in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

The need for a Eucharistic Revival stems from surveys that show that a significant percentage of Catholics no longer believe in Jesus' real presence in the Eucharist. Additional studies have shown that a significant percentage of these Catholics believe that the Church teaches that Jesus' presence in the Eucharist is only symbolic. The Catholic Church has always believed and taught that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist. In "The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church," the American bishops wrote, "The reality that, in the Eucharist, bread and wine become the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ without ceasing to appear as bread and wine to our five senses is one of the central mysteries of the Catholic faith."

In today's first reading, the sacrifice offered by Melchizedek foreshadows Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross and our belief that Jesus' sacrifice is made real and present each time we celebrate Eucharist. Like Jesus at the Last Supper, Melchizedek brought bread and wine to the sacrifice. At every Eucharist, we offer ourselves through, with, and in Christ to God the Father Almighty in the unity of the Holy Spirit. In every Eucharist, we join ourselves to the sacrifice of Christ.

In today's Gospel, the multiplication of the loaves and fish also foreshadows the gift of the Eucharist. Luke uses the same Eucharistic language he would use at the Last Supper: "*Then taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.*" Just as Jesus depended on the disciples to distribute the bread and fish, he depends upon us to be his hands and feet today. Likewise, that all ate and were satisfied and there were twelve wicker baskets left over foreshadows the superabundance of God's gift to us in the Eucharist.

Paul's account of the Last Supper in First Corinthians is one of two occasions when Paul solemnly introduces what he is about to teach: "*I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you.*" The other time concerns Jesus' resurrection. This suggests that belief in the Eucharist is equally important as belief in the resurrection of Jesus. Obviously, bread and wine do not physically become the body and blood of Christ. They certainly maintain the appearances of bread and wine. They become the body and blood of Christ sacramentally.

Let me suggest an explanation of Real Presence that makes sense to me. Physical food and drink nourish us because as they are digested, they become part of our body, part of us. For this to happen, we have to eat and drink. In other words, I cannot make part of me something that is outside the boundaries of my body. My soul, my spirit, my being, is limited by my body.

Jesus, however, is not limited by his body. In the words of consecration, Jesus identifies the bread and the wine with himself, with his body and blood: "'This is my body.... This is my blood.'" In other words, he extends his soul, his spirit, his being, to the bread and wine, transforming them sacramentally into his body and blood.

My brothers and sisters, most of us were excited when we received our First Communion. We believed that the Eucharist really was the body and blood of Christ. We saw the Eucharist with eyes of faith. Sometimes as we grow up, we stop seeing with eyes of faith. To believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, we have to see with eyes of faith.