

Corpus Christi - C  
Genesis 14:18-20;  
I Corinthians 11:23-26;  
Luke 9:11b-17  
Little Flower - 6/22/25

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. Today is also my last opportunity to preach to the whole parish as Administrator of Little Flower Parish. Next Sunday we celebrate my 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a priest, so I will only celebrate two Masses next weekend.

It seems that Corpus Christi is the perfect Sunday for my last parish homily before Fr. Jude becomes administrator. At every Eucharist, bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Both as individuals and as a community, the Eucharist also transforms us into the Body of Christ called to pour out our lives in loving service of others. One reason we ask you to bring the bread and wine to the altar is because the bread and wine symbolize us asking to be transformed.

In the New Testament the primary image for the Church is the Body of Christ. It is the Eucharist that defines us as Catholic Christians. Celebrating Sunday Eucharist is the most important thing we do as Catholics. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *"Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."* [1 Cor. 10:17]. As I have said many times, it is our Liturgy, especially our music, and our welcoming spirit that draw people to Little Flower.

In my first homily, I said, "I want you to know that I believe this parish is your parish." Therefore, today I want to say that as a parish we have accomplished wonderful things these last 22 years, you and the staff far more than me. Little Flower is blessed with so many wonderful parishioners who give so generously of their time, talent, and treasure. Little Flower is blessed with a staff that is so committed to and engaged in the life of the parish. Thank you!

The first weekend of a priest in a new parish is always difficult. He looks out and sees a sea of strange faces. The last weekend of a priest in a parish is also always difficult. He looks out and sees a sea of familiar faces that he will not see again in the same way. After 22 years, you are my family. I know most of you at least by face, by Mass, or by pew.

Twenty-two years in a parish is a long time. I have witnessed so many changes. I am sure that some of the children I baptized my first years are now married and have children. I know for sure that at least two have died. All of us are 22 years older. Many of the leaders of the parish when I first arrived have left their leadership roles, and some have passed to the Lord. Many parishioners have moved in, and many have moved out. There have been many highlights and a few low lights during these twenty-two years.

I am very grateful to all of you. The staff and really all of you have been very kind, supportive, and generous to me. I hope you will be as kind, supportive, and generous to Fr. Jude and Deacon Gary. I believe Fr. Jude will be a wonderful pastor and Deacon Gary will be a wonderful deacon. Even though I will still live at Little Flower for the time being, I will miss serving as your pastor. When I prepare couples for marriage, I tell them that there are no perfect people and no perfect relationships. Likewise, there are no perfect priests. Therefore, I want to apologize to anyone whose feelings I may have hurt or whom I did not serve well.

Finally, my brothers and sisters, I want to make the words of Paul to the Philippians my final words to you:

*I thank God for you every time I think of you, and every time I pray for you all, I pray with joy. I am sure that God who began this good work in you, will carry it on... You are always in my heart! ... my deep feeling for you all comes from the heart of Christ Jesus.*

*I pray that your love will keep on growing more and more and your lives will be filled with the truly good qualities which only Jesus Christ can produce, for the glory and praise of God.*