

From the Desk of Fr. Patrick

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, traditionally known as Corpus Christi, is one of the most beautiful celebrations in the Roman Catholic Church. On this feast, the Church proclaims with great joy and faith that Jesus Christ is truly present in the Holy Eucharist, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. The Eucharist is not merely a symbol or a reminder of Jesus, but Christ Himself truly present among His people. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says clearly: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven, whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life." These words shocked many of His listeners because Jesus spoke literally, not symbolically. Yet Jesus did not change His teaching because the Eucharist is the greatest gift He left to His Church. In the first reading from Deuteronomy, Moses reminds the Israelites how God fed them with manna in the desert. That manna was a foreshadowing of the true heavenly bread, the Eucharist, which nourishes us on our journey toward eternal life. Just as the Israelites needed food to survive physically in the wilderness, Christians need the Eucharist to survive spiritually in a world often filled with confusion, temptation, and suffering.

Throughout the history of the Church, God has strengthened faith in the Eucharist through many Eucharistic miracles. One of the most famous miracles occurred in Lanciano - Italy during the 8th century. A priest who struggled with doubts about the Real Presence was celebrating Mass when the consecrated host visibly turned into human flesh and the wine turned into blood. Scientific studies conducted centuries later revealed that the flesh was human heart tissue and the blood was real human blood. Another well-known miracle took place in Bolsena-Italy in 1263, when a priest doubting the Eucharist saw blood flowing from the consecrated host onto the altar cloth during Mass. This miracle inspired Pope Urban IV to establish the universal feast of Corpus Christi for the entire Church. In more recent times, Eucharistic miracles have also been reported in places such as Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1996, where scientific investigations again identified human heart tissue in a consecrated host. These miracles remind us that the Eucharist is not ordinary bread but the living Christ who gives Himself completely for the salvation of the world.

The Eucharist is also the sacrament of unity and charity. Every time we gather at Mass, people of different backgrounds, cultures, languages, and ages come together around one altar and receive the same Lord. The Eucharist strengthens families, heals wounded hearts, forgives venial sins, and gives courage during suffering. Many saints drew their strength from the Blessed Sacrament. Teresa of Calcutta once said, "When you look at the crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you. When you look at the Eucharist, you understand how much Jesus loves you now." Thomas Aquinas, who wrote many hymns for Corpus Christi, called the Eucharist the "Bread of Angels" because heaven itself touches earth through this sacrament. In everyday life, we see the power of the Eucharist when people faithfully attend Mass despite illness, when parents bring children to church every Sunday, when someone finds peace during Eucharistic adoration, or when a person returns to the faith after years away. Corpus Christi invites us not only to believe in the Eucharist but also to become what we receive, the Body of Christ for others through love, service, forgiveness, and compassion. As we honor the Body and Blood of Christ, may we deepen our reverence for the Eucharist and recognize Jesus truly present in every Mass and in every tabernacle throughout the world.

-Fr. Patrick