

Solemnity of Corpus Christi

The Eucharist is the heart of our Catholic faith. If we don't believe in the Eucharist we might as well not be Catholic. Where else can we find so much grace available to us? Where else can we encounter the living Christ in such a concrete way?

We believe that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist. This Jesus we receive is not a symbol. He is not a watered down version of the Jesus of the Gospels, stripped of His power. No! Jesus is present in all His power and glory. The same Jesus who raised Lazarus and others from the dead is present in the Eucharist. He who fed thousands with a few fish and loaves of bread is present at every Mass waiting for us to receive Him so that we can be fed. The same Jesus who healed the paralytic and countless others is present in every Eucharist. This is the same Jesus who walked on water and calmed the storm. How awesome is that?

Yet it gets better. He passionately longs for us to receive Him. He ardently desires to give Himself to us. He fervently yearns for a relationship with us. It was because of His infinite love for us that He created the Eucharist to be with us. It was not enough for Him to just give up His life for our salvation. He wanted to give us Himself. His love is so great He is willing to wait countless hours for us to visit Him in the tabernacle. What more can He give us? Nothing on Earth can compare with what God has to give us in the Eucharist.

He longs to come to us as often as possible in the Eucharist. It is His desire to pour His love upon us, to bless us beyond our imagination. In every communion there is a virtual Niagara Falls of grace available to those who are truly open to His love.

Yet Mass after Mass we receive Communion and little seems to happen. We leave the church the same people who walked in.

Why is that? Perhaps if you ask yourself these question, it will help you examine your readiness to receive the graces of the Eucharist:

Could the fault be mine? Could it be that I come out the way I want to? Could it be that I, in my pride, think I know what is best so I reject the graces that God wants to give me? Do I seek only physical blessings and say no to the spiritual graces that must come first?

Am I really willing to change? Have I sacramentally prepared myself by confession? Am I seeking His blessings on my terms only or seeking to follow His way? Am I afraid to give up control?

Do I desire intimacy with Jesus? Do I really focus on Jesus or am I distracted by the people around me? Do I desire a real relationship with Him or am I afraid to really let Him into my heart?

Do I trust Jesus? Do I believe that He understands what I'm going through and knows what is best for me? Am I afraid that if He really knew me, I would be rejected? Do I understand the intensity of His love and that I don't have to be perfect? Do I understand that He loves me as I am, accepts me where I am and will bring me to a better place if I allow His grace to change me?

Have I lost the real meaning of the Mass? Am I so used to going through the motions of the outward ritual that I fail to give my heart to Jesus? Am I too focused on parish politics and activities? Am I so busy wondering who's at Mass or worrying about what Father said or didn't say that I forget that Mass is a time for me to connect with Jesus?

Am I full of negative feelings towards others? Am I too busy complaining about the traffic, the music, the crowd or lack of attendance to be open to Jesus' love?

Is my mind elsewhere? Am I so focused on the problems at work or at home that I fail to open myself to the one who has the answer? Am I using the time I should be praying at Mass to mentally tick off my grocery list or the menu at Dunkin Donuts? Am I thinking about the game this afternoon, or the movie I saw last night?

Is it any wonder we get so little out of Communion? Do we think this is what Jesus intended? Is this why He created the Eucharist?

We need to remember that we are called to be a Eucharistic people. Jesus wanted to be at the center of our lives, to be with us, to comfort and console us, to strengthen us, to bless us immensely and even heal us.

We need to remember that in the Eucharist is God Who possesses infinite power, the God of infinite love and mercy Who wants what is best for us and avidly longs to bless us. We need to remember that the Blessed Sacrament is most worthy of our attention, reverence and love, and worthy of mental and spiritual preparation and discipline.

Let's resolve to celebrate this Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ in a spirit of reparation for our past offences against the Eucharist and in a spirit of great gratitude for this sublime gift. If we truly get in the habit of examining and improving our prayerful participation in the Eucharist, this feast — and all Masses throughout the year — will fill us with every grace and blessing.

- Fr. David M. Chiantella