

## Homily for Corpus Christi Sunday

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, also known by its Latin title, *Corpus Christi*, Body of Christ. Now, you might be thinking to yourself: “Don’t we celebrate the Body and Blood of Christ every Sunday of the year?” Yes, true. At every Mass, we worship God in our celebration of the holy Eucharist. But today’s feast highlights for us the mystery of transubstantiation. Transub-what? Transubstantiation is the churchy word that defines what takes place during the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass when the ordinary bread and wine become the very Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ – actually, truly, and really!

The word transubstantiation is, of course, not found in the Bible – but for that matter, neither is the word “trinity”, which was the Mystery we celebrated last week! And don’t we as Catholics get that question a lot from other Christians and others – “Well, where is that in the Bible?” My response to that question is nearly always another question – “Well, who said it had to be in the Bible?” Indeed, Jesus did not come to found a Bible. Nowhere did He command His Disciples to write down His words and form them into a book. Rather, Jesus came to establish His Body, the Church. And Jesus gave to that Church the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven so that His Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit, would continue to teach what He Himself taught.

And what did Jesus teach? Well, things like the Eucharist – Holy Communion – is truly His Body and Blood! Just look at our Gospel passage today from John 6. Jesus proclaims, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you...For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him...whoever eats this bread will live forever.” But is this what Jesus really meant? Is Holy Communion really Jesus’ Body and Blood? Many other Christians say, “no”! It’s just a symbol, or something to that effect.

So, how can we really know what Jesus meant? We’re all reading the same Bible and interpreting it differently! Well, what did the earliest of Christians, right after the time of the Bible, believe? St. Justin the Martyr, who was born in the year 100 AD wrote, “We call this food Eucharist...For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior... had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by Him...is both the flesh and blood of that incarnated Jesus.” Sounds like what we as Catholics believe today! And this is just one testimony – there are so many more just like it! And so, all down through the ages, the Church which Jesus came to establish, has preserved this teaching, so that Christians today in 2017 can know for sure – beyond the shadow of a doubt – what Jesus really meant!

My friends, if we really understood the gift that we have in the Eucharist we would crawl on our knees to receive Holy Communion. But even though we may not crawl, our worship of Jesus who comes to us as true food and true drink should be no less intense. To help us grow in our fervor for our Eucharistic Lord, our parish celebration of 40 Hours Eucharistic Devotions will take place beginning next Sunday, June 25<sup>th</sup> through Tuesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. Prayer services will be held each evening in the church at 7pm. Our guest homilist will be Fr. Dan Richards from St. Rose of Lima, York. I would ask you to please make the effort as far as your schedules permit to attend these services. Also, I highly encourage you to come to the church during these days for the advertised times of Eucharistic Adoration for personal prayer. Please sign up as you can on the posters at the entrances of the church. But even if you're not able to commit to a certain time, you're encouraged to stop in and make shorter visits to our Eucharistic Lord.

To conclude, I want to do something a little different. I'll call it Catholic Show and Tell. You remember the idea of "Show and Tell" from Kindergarten? Someone brings something in, shows it to the class, and tells them what it is! So, in preparation for 40 Hours, I'd like to do a brief Show and Tell about Eucharistic Adoration...