

June 11, 2023

Cycle A – Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a

Psalm: 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

John: 6:51-58

Notes from Bishop Peter

1. History of the Feast: Saint Juliana of Liege (Belgium), an 18-year-old nun, received a vision of Jesus in 1209. He requested a feast day in honor of Himself in the Blessed Sacrament. She went to her parish priest with this request. The priest believed her and the feast was celebrated locally; finally Pope Urban IV extended it to the universal church in 1264.
2. We have the oldest text written about the Eucharist (around the year 55 AD) in I Corinthians, chapter 11 thanks to the “drunks of Corinth.” They used to bring their own food and wine to consume prior to the celebration of the Eucharist and didn’t share them with those who had none. St. Paul reprimands them saying, “Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord.”
 - a. Were this simply bread and wine, Paul would not have written so forcefully. **No – The consecrated bread and wine become and remain the body and blood of Jesus Christ – really!**
3. When the priest consecrates the bread and wine, Jesus “projects” himself with his wounds and his tremendous love for us so that what were bread and wine are now and remain the body and blood of Christ. When we receive Communion, he gives us his Holy Spirit who transforms us little by little into living images of Jesus himself. “We become what we receive.”
 - a. We recall that, by his dying on the cross, Jesus takes an act of brutality and torture and transforms it into one of unselfish love and makes us capable of unselfish love as well.
 - b. St. John Paul II wrote that Jesus uses the voice of the priest. Thus it is Jesus who consecrates.
4. Witness of Faith in Christ’s presence in the Most Blessed Sacrament:
 - a. Some years ago, Father Augustine Giusani of St. Ann Church, New Britain was informed by police that his church had been broken into and the

tabernacle smashed. They accompanied him as he searched for the hosts in the neighborhood. He found some in a garbage heap and kneeling began to consume them. The police observed this with awe. **Would he have done this had he considered the hosts to be only bread?**

5. Results of assisting at Mass and receiving the Most Holy Eucharist:
 - a. Jesus helps us live as he did and see his presence in the members of our families no matter who they are or what they have done. Also, in the poor, the sick, refugees and undocumented immigrants who fear deportation.
 - Among the poorest is Sister Earth who suffers because of our lack of respect for her – climate change...
 - b. Ask Jesus after receiving him in Holy Communion to help you in whatever way you know you need him – to be a better father or mother, son or daughter, friend, student...
 - c. It is important to remember that Jesus in the Eucharist sends us into the world to re-present him (make him present) in all the aspects of our daily lives.
6. We come to the Eucharistic part of our Mass. Let us listen to the words of St. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem who wrote them around the year 345: “On the night Jesus was betrayed, he took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ He took the cup, gave thanks and said, ‘Take, drink; this is my blood.’ Since Christ himself has declared the bread to be his body, who can have any further doubt? Since he himself has said quite categorically, ‘This is my blood,’ who would dare question it and say that it is not his blood? “Therefore, it is with complete assurance that we receive the bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ.”

Amen.