

## Commentary on the Readings for the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ

Next Sunday the Church celebrates the beautiful feast of the **Body and Blood of Christ** which, in years past, was known by its Latin name *Corpus Christi*. It is fitting that we should celebrate this divine gift to mankind right after the Easter Season because it was as a result of the original events we just celebrated that Jesus gave us something to remember Him by. However, “*Do this in remembrance of me*” means more than an occasional mental recognition of this great gift. It is recognizing that the Body and Blood of Christ is the sustaining food for our souls in our journey through life. Let us see how the Readings support this.

In the **First Reading** from the *Book of Exodus (8:2,3, 14 – 16)*, we hear the voice of Moses reminding the Israelites of how God provided for them in a “howling desert” during a testing period to see if they would remain faithful to Him. God gave them ‘food from heaven’ called manna, but at the same time, Moses admonishes them to remember that there are things more important than food for the body. Faith and obedience will get us further than a loaf of bread!

In the **Responsorial Psalm (147:12 – 20)** we hear the psalmist praising God for His many gifts and benevolence to the Israelites throughout a long period of Salvation History. *We* are also the beneficiaries of these same gifts, but through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ these gifts continue in a spiritual way that will last forever – if we understand and accept them as gifts to sustain the spiritual life within us.

In the **Second Reading** from St. Paul’s *First Letter to the Corinthians (10:16 – 17)*, we hear Paul preaching to his congregation that when we partake of the Body and Blood of Christ we become as family. If we believe that what we are doing is following the command of Christ at the Last Supper then doesn’t that make us related in our intent? When we come together to enjoy the American Thanksgiving Day Dinner, we don’t come just to eat turkey. We come to enjoy the fellowship of family and friends which brings us closer together. Our receiving the Body and Blood of Christ at Mass should bring the congregation closer together and not cause us to run out before the mass is over. Would you leave the Thanksgiving Day table before the dinner was over?

In the **Gospel Reading**, from the *Gospel of John (6:51 – 58)*, we hear Jesus tell His apostles and us, emphatically, that the bread and wine consecrated at Catholic Mass is the same Body and Blood that hung on the cross for us. It is also the food for our souls and without it our souls would die. Unlike the bread that Moses gave his followers in the desert, Jesus gives us something far greater. This divine bread will sustain us on our journey back to the Father.

Many people come to Mass every Sunday and receive the Body and Blood of Christ, *Corpus Christi*, but do they really understand what they are receiving? St. Paul tells us to take this seriously, that to receive this great gift unworthily could lead to condemnation (**1 Cor. 11:27 – 29**). However, let us look on the brighter side; to come closer to Jesus Christ, the fountain of love, should make us spiritually happy and loving. Do you take communion seriously? Are you spiritually happy and at peace? Something to think about during your Prayer time this week!

-MFB

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