

FEAST OF THE BODY & BLOOD OF CHRIST or CORPUS CHRISTI

As we discuss about food & eating with today's feast, I'm reminded of this cute story to share with you. After a delicious lunch in an Italian restaurant, the well-traveled businesswoman called the chef over to compliment him on the meal. "Frankly sir, your eggplant parmesan was better than the one I ate in Milan last Tue," she told him.

"It's not surprising, mam," said the chef proudly. "They use domestic cheese. Here we use imported!"

Anyway, last Sunday we learn about God with the Feast of the Holy Trinity. This Sunday we celebrate the presence of our God with the Feast of the Body & Blood of Christ or Corpus Christi. For us Christians, this feast sure has significant meaning in our spiritual life. But under COVID-19 & the order of staying-at-home shutdown, it takes on a new spiritual dimension & matters a lot more to us now than before. Many of you have told me how much you've missed the Holy Eucharist & coming to church. For that special gift is the life blood & spiritual strength to help us make it through a week. Without it, we'll feel lost & discouraged in this uncertain & challenging time. Some of us might also rely on the Holy Eucharist or Mass for other personal reasons. So, what is it about the Holy Eucharist that gives it such a unique power & plays such an important part in our spiritual life?

Whenever we talk about the Holy Eucharist, we immediately connect it to the presence of our Lord at the Last Supper. As you might recall, on that historical night Jesus sat down for dinner with His 12 apostle to share His last meal with them & commanded them to repeat the same thing in the future in remembrance of Him. So, whenever we get together to celebrate the Holy Eucharist or Last Supper, we recall our Lord's presence & salvific work on the Cross. It's like us getting together with our loved ones on special occasions like Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc. to carry on a precious tradition & try to pass it on to the next generations. That's what we hope to do by repeating the Mass celebration here every weekend.

But, the Holy Eucharist is more than just a historical celebration. We Catholics believe that it's the real Body & Blood of our Lord. In fact, Jesus reminded His disciples to eat "His flesh or the Living Bread" & drink "His blood or the fountain of life" if we want to have life. That's why at each Mass the priest repeats Jesus' sacred words at the time of consecration to bless & change the bread & wine into the Body & Blood of our Lord. The Holy Eucharist is no longer about a fellowship meal or sharing bread & wine as friends & followers of Jesus. Rather, it's about consuming the real Body & Blood of our Lord. We do that to gain the super strength & infinite wisdom of our Lord. In other words, we want to become what we eat. If the Holy Eucharist represents the divine power & presence of Jesus, then we take it in order for its power to change or transform us to be like Him. We'll have His strength to deal with our daily challenges. We'll have His wisdom to know right from wrong & make the right decisions for ourselves. Certainly the Holy Eucharist can bring many other blessings to us like peace, comfort, right discernment, & so on. That's why the Holy Eucharist is so vital & precious in our Christian faith.

As you might know, we Catholics have 7 Sacraments to help us connect to the divine life & channel its power into our personal life. Those Sacraments are Baptism, Reconciliation or Confession, Communion or Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Holy Order, Marriage, & Anointing of the Sick or Last Rite. We all know how each Sacrament connects us to God & directs God's grace to us from the day of our re-birth in Christ to the time of our last breath. Each Sacrament has its own benefits & unique purpose in our Christian life. For example, Baptism is used to wash away our Original Sin & give us a chance to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Reconciliation or Confession helps us come back to God & God's family after being far away or doing something to offend God & others. Confirmation is used to reaffirm our commitment to follow our Lord Jesus & ask the Holy Spirit to pour down its gifts into our lives. Holy Order is a way for the Lord to anoint the successors of His first apostles & continue the mission of salvation He has left behind with us. Marriage is how God unites two lives as husband & wife & sends them forth to multiply & form a loving family. Anointing of the Sick or the Last Rite is a divine way to

bring us healing & help us prepare for our journey home to Heaven. Finally, Communion or Holy Eucharist is the best way for us to reconnect to the Lord & get the divine nourishment for our daily life. As you might notice, among 7 Sacraments the Holy Eucharist is the most vital & unique. Only the Holy Eucharist can be celebrated with other 6 Sacraments. That's why we Catholics have usually celebrated the Holy Eucharist at all spiritual events like Weddings, Funerals, graduation, & so on. That's why we the faithful wished to be around the Holy Eucharist during the COVID shutdown.

Lastly, the Holy Eucharist is a spiritual way for us to reconnect with the past & look forward to the future. The Holy Eucharist helps us remember what Jesus did for us at the Last Supper. Namely, he left with us a precious gift to nourish us on our faith journey & show us how much He loves us. The Holy Eucharist also lets us know about the Heavenly Banquet that God the Father has prepared for us after this life. He'll satisfy all of our needs at that banquet & give us food & drink that will last forever. One day we'll all gather around that same Altar in Heaven as the Family of God to enjoy the Heavenly Banquet.

My dear brothers & sisters, the Holy Eucharist is a special gift that our Lord has left behind to remind us of His presence & nourish us on our faith journey. I hope we'll never take it for granted & continue to cherish it all the days of our lives. That's how we can stay close to Jesus & reconnect ourselves to Heaven.