

HOMILY for the FEAST of BODY & BLOOD of CHRIST – Year C

Reflecting on this Sunday's Feast of the Body & Blood of Christ reminds me of this cute story that I'd like to share with you.

After a delicious lunch in an Italian restaurant, the well-travelled 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 Tuesday," she told him.

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

Anyhow, this Sunday the Church invites us to celebrate the Feast of the Body & Blood of Christ or, Corpus Christi. Surely the feast is designed to help us remember the Last Supper with Jesus & celebrate the real presence of God the Son in our Catholic faith. In this Sunday's Second Reading, Paul helps us reminisce about the Last Supper as following, "...the Lord Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed took bread, & after He had given thanks, broke it, & said, 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after the supper, He took the cup saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' Every time then you eat this bread & drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes!" So, evidently Paul tells us the scene of the Last Supper & also reminds us Jesus' last words for His disciples to remember Him.

Now we know what Jesus said at the Last Supper & why we repeat those sacred words at each Mass. Still, we Catholics value & adore the Blood of Jesus above everything on earth including gold & diamond. For we believe that this spiritual treasure is the true source of spiritual nourishment & sacred treasure of our Catholic faith. The Holy Eucharist is not a symbol of the Body & Blood of Jesus or sign of His presence like many Christian denominations might consider. For us Catholics, it is the real Body & Blood of Jesus & the true source of nourishment for our spiritual life. It is the healing remedy for our body & soul. We rely on it to comfort us & give us encouragement. We count on it to strengthen us & bring us hope. We long for it so that we can be one with Jesus & become like Him. That is the ultimate goal for us when we celebrate the Holy Eucharist & Mass.

Surely you have heard the saying, "You are what you eat." If you were birds, you would love worms & bugs. If you were bees, you would enjoy being around flowers. If you were carnivores, you could not survive in this world without consuming meat every day. Since we are disciples of Jesus, we got to consume spiritual foods such as the Holy Eucharist to nourish & strengthen us. That is why the Holy Eucharist is so vital to our survival in this life. Without the Holy Eucharist, we will be malnourished & eventually spiritually weakened. The Eucharist makes us strong in our spiritual life & helps us be like Jesus. It transforms us & turns us to be like Christ. That is the hope & the ultimate goal of the Eucharist. But, what does it mean to be like Jesus? What do we have to do to become like Christ?

This Sunday's Gospel tells us the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves & fish to feed a huge hungry crowd. We have heard this miraculous story more than once before. It is not by accident that the Church picks this particular story to be read on this feast. Here are the reasons for it. First, the Church wants us to come to our Lord Jesus & be spiritually nourished by Him. That is why the hungry crowd came to Him & followed Him for days. They knew that He

had the power to heal & restore the afflicted to a normal life. He also had the wisdom & Good News to comfort them & give them hope. They realized that if they hung around Him long enough, they would find the best protection & wonderful blessings. But, they did not know that He would perform the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves & fish to nourish & take care of them & a hungry crowd of over five thousand people.

However, it is not just nourishment that the Church wants us to hear this miraculous story. It also would like us to become like Jesus. Yet, what does it mean to be like Jesus? Here is how this Sunday's Gospel tells us about that, "...As the sunset approached, the Twelve came & said to Him [Jesus], 'Dismiss the crowd so that they can go into the villages & farms in the neighborhood & find themselves lodging & food, for this is certainly an out-of-the-way place.' He answered them, 'Why do you not give them something to eat yourselves?'" As you can see, the twelve apostles wanted to dismiss the hungry crowd & let them fend for themselves. That is how the world & our current leaders would want us to do with the poor & the misfortunate. But, Jesus commanded the twelve apostles & us to take good care of those poor folks. So, to be like Jesus means to be compassionate & caring to the world around us, especially the poor & the misfortunate. Next, the five loaves & two fish came from a young boy who apparently went on that long journey with the crowd well prepared. He knew that he needed to bring along some food for himself. He was ready for a long journey with Jesus. But, everyone else was not prepared. When he found out that everyone around him was in need of some sustenance, he did not fight to keep all the provisions to himself like what we have heard happening in our country lately. He acted contrary to our selfish & greedy capitalist attitude & decided to share it with the needy around him. He let Jesus use him as an instrument of God & perform a spectacular miracle that brought nourishment & new life to that hungry crowd. Because of his compassionate & caring spirit, Jesus was able to perform that awesome miracle. When we have the spirit of that boy, wonderful things like that miracle would happen in our world every day. God could use us to transform the world & bring it lots of awesome blessings & miracles. That is what it means to be like Jesus, namely, to allow God to use us as His instruments & accomplish wonderful things. That is the ultimate goal of celebrating the Eucharist & Mass, namely, to invoke Jesus to nourish & change our world.

My dear brothers & sisters, the Feast of the Body & Blood of Christ reminds us of the great source of spiritual nourishment that we Catholics have in the Holy Eucharist. It also challenges us to become what we eat, namely, Jesus. When we could do that, Jesus will be able to bring great blessings & miracles not only to us but also the world around us.