

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

Reflecting on the Feast of Body & Blood of Christ, I'm reminded of this favorite cute story of mine that I'd like to share with you.

A man walked into a restaurant in a strange town. The waiter came & asked him for his order. Feeling lonely, he replied, "Meat loaf & a kind word." When the waiter returned with the meat loaf, the man said, "Where's the good word?"

The waiter put down the meat loaf & sighed, bent down, & whispered, "Don't eat the meat loaf!"

Anyway, our body needs food & water to survive & grow. That is why we have to eat & drink every day. Without food & water, we can survive from three to seven days. If we have water but no food, our body can last significantly longer from one to three weeks. In other words, our body will not last long without food & water. Likewise, our soul/spirit needs nourishment to keep it strong & sharp. It needs spiritual food & drink to nourish & strengthen it. Without proper nourishment, our soul/spirit would be malnourished & deteriorated. That is why we are not surprised to hear a lot of discussion recently about mental health problems. Those problems have risen because some people have not fed their souls/spirit at all. Hence, their souls/spirit could not deal with their daily challenges. They have let those challenges overwhelm them & cause them all sorts of problems.

They should have learned from the people of God in the past & come to the Lord for divine assistance. This Sunday's First Reading reminds us how the Lord came to their help & gave them nourishment as following, "...He [the Lord] therefore let you be afflicted with hunger, & then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you & your fathers, in order to show you that not by bread alone does human live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the Lord." It continues, "...Remember, the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the Land of Egypt, that place of slavery; who guided you through the vast & terrible desert with its saraph serpents & scorpions, its parched & waterless ground; who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock." We are reminded how the Lord freed the people of God from bondage & then nourished them with manna from Heaven & water from the flinty rock in the desert. The Lord also healed them from snake bites & other mental & spiritual wounds. More importantly, the Lord taught the people of God that they did not have to depend on solely on food & worldly things to survive in this world. They could count on the Lord & His words of wisdom to strengthen & guide them. That is why the people of God have always come to the Lord in good times & in bad for support & guidance.

Realizing the need for spiritual nourishment & the future problems, Jesus left behind His own body & blood to help His disciples spiritually. That is why this Sunday we are invited to celebrate that wonderful gift with the Feast of the Body & Blood of Christ/Corpus Christi. Here is how this Sunday's Gospel tells us about the Feast: "Jesus said to the crowds: 'I myself am the living bread come down from Heaven. If anyone eats this bread, one shall live forever: the bread I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.'" Evidently Jesus wanted to let the world know that His body & blood would be the living bread & drink that brings nourishment & life. Imagine that! But, that is not all. Jesus continued, "...Anyone who feeds on my flesh & drinks my blood has life eternal; & I will raise up that person on the Last Day... Anyone who feeds on my flesh & drinks my blood remains in me; & I in the person... Anyone who feeds on this bread shall

live forever.” So, Jesus wanted to add one more important bonus for anyone who feeds on His flesh & drinks His blood. The person will not only have life but also be blessed with the resurrection on the Last Day & the eternal life. The person will remain in Jesus & have the divine life. As you can see, the body & blood of Jesus will benefit us not only in this life but also the next.

In my priestly ministry, I have seen many caring & generous folks come to the aid of others & make huge personal sacrifices amidst a selfish & greedy world. I have seen family members & friends donate bodily organs & make personal sacrifices for their loved ones. I have witnessed compassionate people give the shirts on their back to strangers & help out their neighbors in times of need. The generous & compassionate acts of these kind people bring tears to our eyes in a selfish & greedy world. They are a shining example of Jesus in a dark & hopeless world. They have been able to imitate our Lord’s compassionate & generous nature & practice it in their daily lives. Our world would look a little bit like Heaven if everyone would act like Jesus & generously share God’s blessings for them with others. That is why Jesus did not hesitate to share His whole self with us – His own body & blood. For He wanted everyone to be like Him & help bring more sunshine to our dark & hopeless world. That is how we could transform our current world & make it be like Heaven.

My dear brothers & sisters, a wise person once said, “You are what you eat.” If we are carnivores, we will enjoy searching for & eating meat. If we are vegetarians, we will prefer veggies to meat. If we call ourselves Jesus’ disciples/Catholics/Christians, we must act like Him every day. If we consume the body & blood of Jesus, we must become Him & behave like Him. That is how we can show the world the nutritious values & spiritual meanings of the Holy Eucharist. That is how we can continue the mission of salvation of Jesus & bring our world closer to His Kingdom.