

Homily: The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ: Cycle B: 2024; Dt 8: 2-3, 14b-16a; Ps 147; 1 Corth 10: 16-17; Jn 6: 51-58

“The Gift of the Holy Eucharist: The Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ”

1. **Reality** - Jesus’s one eternal Sacrifice for the salvation of the human beings, living and deceased, is renewed at every Mass! Do we realize what that means? It is truly Jesus’s Body and Blood under the signs of bread and wine. As Jesus teaches us in the Gospel of John chapter 6, He gives us his Body and Blood as true food and true drink. It is not cannibalism. The **graces** Jesus won for us on the Cross are applied to all souls at every Mass; but how much we benefit from the graces depends on the disposition of our heart when we attend Mass and particularly when we receive Holy Communion. The offering of the Mass benefits both the living and the deceased souls who are saved, which is why we offer Masses for our departed loved ones who may be in Purgatory being purified of the remnant of their sins and in need of prayer - the most perfect of which is the Holy Mass - see the book: ***My Conversations with Poor Souls.*** The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Faith as Catholics, which is also why we need to pray daily for an increase in vocations to the priesthood in our AJ Diocese especially since the priesthood and the Eucharist are intimately connected.
2. **Reverence** - We are all called to adore the Lord in the Eucharist. I encourage all of you to come to our **3 PM Eucharistic holy hour** each Wednesday and Friday to adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, as well as after every Monday morning Mass and after 1st Friday morning Mass. What a Divine gift it is to adore our Blessed Lord! We share our life with other ppl, why not more with the source of our life, namely, the Lord? How we will be blessed - if we do it! St. John Vianney once said, *that if more people would pray before the Blessed Sacrament, our Church and our world would be quickly transformed by the Lord’s love.* We all should have a profound spirit of *reverence, thanksgiving* and *gratitude* for the fact that Jesus gave us the Eucharist, at the Last Supper, as the perpetual memorial of His Holy Passion and that He will remain with us in all the Tabernacles throughout the world until He comes again in glory. What are some **practical**

things we can do to show Him our reverence and our gratitude for this profound gift of His Body and Blood in the Eucharist? The **first** and most important is to make sure we never receive Jesus in Holy Communion with mortal sin on our soul. We need to go to Confession first before receiving Holy Communion in that situation. In addition, we show our love for Him by remembering to keep the little one hour fast from food and drink (this includes gum and candy), except for water and medicine, prior to receiving Holy Communion. If we are receiving the Lord in the hand to make a throne for Him and not grab at the Host, and make sure to consume any particles on our hand and be careful if the Host accidentally breaks that it doesn't fall on the ground. Also genuflecting or bowing to the Tabernacle when entering Church and leaving. Paying attention at Mass. Also trying to dress appropriately for Mass shows that we recognize this as a special reality, and since Jesus wants to give Himself fully to us, we must show both exteriorly and interiorly that we are giving Him our best effort. We also should never come to Mass immodestly dressed; remember our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and we are never to be an occasion of sin for another anywhere, but esp. at Mass. Reverence also includes coming to Mass regularly on time and not leaving early unless we are sick or absolutely can't help it because of work or family obligations that we can't get out of. Remember Mass begins with the opening hymn/antiphon and doesn't officially end until the final blessing/hymn is ended. Finally, we need to cultivate a deeper spirit of recollection and prayer at Mass. Come early to prepare your heart for this gift of the Mass; and after Communion spend some minutes praying to the Blessed Trinity who is now in your heart, as I mentioned last week on Trinity Sunday - *where Jesus is, so is the Father and the Holy Spirit*. The saints recommend after receiving our Lord in Holy Communion to make a **15–30-minute quiet thanksgiving**, as soon as you can, in Church or outside of Church, in gratitude for receiving Jesus into our soul. In relation to that, we also should try our best to not talk to and distract others unless absolutely necessary **before, during, and after Mass** because other people are trying to pray - to go outside the Body of the Church to talk, esp. in the summer, or speak in a whisper in Church: which again practically shows love for God and neighbor.

3. **Response** - The Eucharist/Mass should be the foundation of our spiritual life as Catholics. The weekly Sunday & Holy Day Masses during the year should be the highpoint of our earthly life. We should also try to go to **daily Mass**, if that is possible depending on our schedules. It's only a half hour a day. All those who are **retired** should really try to attend daily Mass- at least one extra day a week – the best way to start one's day; it will transform you. What is our overall response to the Lord? We are to offer the gift of our life in union with Jesus as He offers Himself to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit for our salvation at every Mass (see Rom 12:1-2). *If we understand what a gift the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus is, we will always want to be here and never skip out: no vacation from Mass which sometimes happens, particularly in the summer. And we would never dream of leaving the Catholic Church, despite whatever problems we may experience sometimes on the human level.* The Body and Blood of Jesus is medicine for our souls to heal us of selfishness and sin and enable us to grow in goodness and virtue. Depending on our disposition of heart and soul, each time we receive Holy Communion it should draw us deeper into the love of the Trinity, as I said last week-end's homily. **In Holy Communion, Jesus wants to turn us into the image of Himself in self-giving love, generosity and kindness.** The primary way this transformation into the image of Jesus occurs in our earthly journey is through the reception of the Eucharist with a humble heart and a deep faith in His Real Presence contained therein. Jesus also draws us and attracts us to a deeper spirit of **prayer** in our daily life when we receive His Body and Blood with love and gratitude and with that spirit of faith and humility. He also enables us to see His image more in our **neighbor**, so we can truly love God and neighbor more fully. The Eucharist properly received will lead over time in charity hence the fulfillment of the great commandment of love of God and neighbor will deepen. **One last great spiritual tip** from St. Louis de Montfort - when coming up for Communion, pray a *Hail Mary* humbly asking Mary to give you her heart, in spirit, to receive Jesus with her total love – it will transform your spiritual life by growing in union with the Lord, always with her perfect love. God bless you. †