

The Most Holy Body And Blood of Christ

Year: B

Ex 24.3-8; Ps 115 (116) Heb 9.11-15; Jn Mk 14.12-16, 22-26

How to get rid of them

Once I had an opportunity to stay at one of my friend's home. Four children in the house would dress up whenever we wanted to go out and these children would pester us to get them along with us. Well, the father of the family invented a trick. What was that? He would tell the children that we would go to the church for mass; the reaction from the children was just cool, not interested to go for mass. Thus he would free the pestering children from disturbing us whenever we wanted to go out.

Well, this need not be the reaction of all the children. But, it tells something about the manner in which Eucharist is celebrated or interest in the Holy Eucharist is manifested.

Shortest Celebration

Recently I was present for a funeral. Since I had already celebrated mass and I would celebrate another mass I did not concelebrate this present funeral mass. The priest celebrated the Holy Eucharist in such a hurry that in just 11 minutes the Eucharist was over. I felt bad.

We need to introspect today the importance of the Holy Eucharistic celebration in our daily life. Make it a powerful means of love and energy to our daily life.

“All we really need in our convent is the tabernacle.”

The former archbishop of San Francisco, John Quinn, loves to tell the story of the arrival of Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity to open their house in the city. Poor Archbishop Quinn had gone to great efforts to make sure that their convent was, while hardly opulent, quite comfortable. He recalls how Mother Teresa arrived and immediately ordered the carpets removed, the telephones, except for one, pulled out of the wall, the beds, except for the mattresses taken away, and on and on. Mother Teresa explained to the baffled archbishop, “All we really need in our convent is the tabernacle”.

Body and Blood of Christ

This Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ repeats the celebration of Holy Thursday. We have completed the cycle of the Sacred *Triduum* when we celebrated the institution of the Holy Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ. Today we are invited simply to meditate again on this incredible gift that God gives us: the very life, body and blood, soul and divinity, of his Son Jesus Christ.

Sacrificial Blood

Lots of us have never really experienced killing animals. Perhaps there are some hunters among us or some farmers. Today the majority of people grow up in urban settings. Meat comes to us packaged in the store. We cannot imagine killing bulls and putting that blood into large bowls and then sprinkling half of it on a large group of people. When we find a lot of blood in a large bowl, then we should know that the animal whose blood it is, is dead. We need our blood within our bodies in order to live. If we have ever experience a terrible accident in which the blood of a person is all over the ground, then we can have some idea of blood. If we have ever butchered an animal, we can have some idea of this meaning of blood.

Blood in Sacrifices

Blood is so important to life! When we separate body and blood, we have death. When Jesus died, the soldier pierced his side and blood and water came out. These are clear signs of his death. Jesus gives his life so that we may have life. Only by accepting his sacrifice for us can we truly understand God's love for

us. God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son who dies so that we might live.

Living to Give Life

If Jesus dies for us, are we willing to die for one another. Am I willing to give my life blood so that others may live? The whole purpose of life is to live for others—this is what Jesus teaches us. The purpose of life is to give our lives up for others.

Why do we spend so much time trying to protect our own lives? Why do we seek to live at the expense of others? What is the meaning of my personal life?

In the Gospel of Mark which we hear today, we see the followers of Jesus preparing for the Last Supper. They follow the instructions of Jesus and everything turns out as he had told them. We are invited to follow Jesus as they did. We also can follow his work and know that everything will turn out as he has told us.

Let us celebrate this Holy Mass today as a true thanksgiving, a Eucharist in the deepest meaning of that word! Let us give thanks for the life of Jesus that is given to us when bread and wine become body and blood. With His life, we have life. With His gift to us we are invited to give our lives as gift to one another. You and I can change this world with the Lord Jesus. May our faith transform us and transform our world. Amen.

“I would like to say Mass.” Dominic Tang, the courageous Chinese archbishop was imprisoned for twenty-one years for nothing more than his loyalty to Christ and his one, true Church. After five years of solitary confinement in a windowless, damp cell, his jailers came to tell him he could leave it for a few hours, to do whatever he wanted. Five years of solitary confinement and he had a couple of hours to do what he wanted! What would it be? A hot shower? A change of clothes? Certainly a long walk outside? A chance to call or write to family? What would it be? asked the jailer. “I would like to say Mass,” replied Archbishop Tang. (Msgr. Timothy M Dolan in *Priests of the Third Millennium*, 2000, p. 216). The Vietnamese Jesuit Joseph Nguyen-Cong Doan, who spent nine years in labor camps in Vietnam, relates how he was finally able to say Mass when a fellow priest-prisoner shared some of his own smuggled supplies. “That night, when the other prisoners were asleep, lying on the floor of my cell, I celebrated Mass with tears of joy. My altar was my blanket, my prison cloths

my vestments. But I felt myself at the heart of humanity and of the whole of creation" (*Ibid.*, p. 224). Today's feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus constantly calls us beyond ourselves in sacrificial love for others.

How Can Bread and Wine...?

A man came to a priest and wanted to make fun of his faith, so he asked, "How can bread and wine turn into the Body and Blood of Christ?" The Priest answered, "No problem. You yourself change food into your body and blood so why can't Christ do the same?" But the man did not give up. He asked, "But how can the entire body of Christ be in such a small host?" "In the same way that the vast landscape before you can fit into your little eye." But he still persisted, "How can the same Christ be present in all your churches at the same time?" The priest then took a mirror and let the man look into it. Then let the mirror fall to the ground and break and said to the skeptic. "There is only one of you and yet you can find your face reflected in each piece of that broken mirror at the same time."

Practical Conclusion

An old man was quietly sitting at the seashore, watching the ceaseless waves dashing against the shore, was depressed, disappointed and sad. Meanwhile he sees a couple with two children passing by happy, hugging one another, joking and smiling. He sighed deeply and asked God "why am I so sad Lord, so disappointed, depressed and these simple people seem to be so content and happy"? At his deep sigh the Lord appeared for the fifth time without any commitment on his part. The Lord said, 'man, I appeared to you four times to grant favours, now I appear to you to tell you why you are sad in spite of the favours received'. I can't grant you any more favours. But I want to tell you why you are still sad. 'For the first time you asked me wealth, I gave it to you, the second time you asked me health, I gave it to you; the third time you asked me power, I gave you power; the fourth time I appeared I told you to ask the last favour and you preferred popularity and even that I gave you'. 'Then why am I so sad and depressed?' asked the old man. The Lord replied 'to be happy in life you should have asked for love. I never force love into any one. I just wait for people to pick it from me. In fact, I give it to everyone without even asking for it, because it is abundantly available with me and with everyone you meet. But

people forget to use that gift. They ask for such a lot of things and they get disillusioned. That is the secret of life and happiness'. Saying this the Lord disappeared. **Through the Eucharist Jesus has taught us to love one another. There is no greater love than laying down one's life for his friends.**