

Homily for the Solemnity of Corpus Christi

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, traditionally known as Corpus Christi. This feast invites us to reflect on one of the greatest gifts Jesus has given to His Church – the Holy Eucharist.

Corpus Christi is, in a sense, three feasts in one: the feast of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the feast of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and the feast of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. While we commemorate the institution of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday, the Church sets aside this special feast to focus our attention on the immense gift that Jesus continues to offer us through the Eucharist. The Eucharist is not simply one sacrament among many. The Church calls it the “source and summit” of the Christian life because it is both the source from which all grace flows and the summit towards which our entire spiritual life is directed. Every Mass is a privileged encounter with Christ Himself.

The Catholic Church teaches that Jesus is truly, really, and substantially present in the Eucharist. Through the mystery of transubstantiation, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, while retaining the appearance of bread and wine. This is not merely a symbol or a reminder of Jesus; it is Jesus Himself who comes to us under the humble forms of bread and wine.

Our faith in the Real Presence is based on the words of Christ. In today's Gospel from St. John's Gospel, Jesus declares: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever.” These words were difficult for many people to accept, but Jesus did not withdraw them. Instead, He repeated them, emphasizing that He would give His flesh for the life of the world.

In the First Reading, Moses reminds the people of Israel not to forget the Lord who fed them with manna in the desert. After years of hardship, they were about to enter the Promised Land. Moses knew that prosperity often leads people to forget God. Therefore, he repeatedly tells them: “Remember” and “Do not forget.”

This message is very relevant for us today. We live in a world filled with distractions. We are busy with our work, studies, family responsibilities, and countless activities. Sometimes we become so occupied with worldly concerns that we forget the One who sustains us. The Feast of Corpus Christi calls us to remember. Every Eucharist is an act of remembrance – not simply recalling an event from the past but making present the saving sacrifice of Christ. At every Mass, we stand spiritually at the foot of the Cross and share in the grace of Christ's sacrifice.

The manna in the desert sustained the Israelites physically, but it could not give eternal life. Jesus, however, offers Himself as the true Bread from Heaven. Those who receive Him worthily receive not only spiritual nourishment but also a foretaste of eternal life.

In the Second Reading, St. Paul speaks about another important dimension of the Eucharist. He reminds us that the Eucharist unites us not only with Christ but also with one another. “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body.” When we come to the altar, we come as one family of God. The Eucharist breaks down

barriers of language, culture, social status, and background. We become one Body in Christ.

This has practical consequences for our daily lives. We cannot claim to love Jesus in the Eucharist while neglecting Him in our brothers and sisters. Genuine devotion to the Blessed Sacrament must be reflected in our relationships with others. If we receive the Body of Christ, we must become the Body of Christ for others through acts of kindness, forgiveness, compassion, and service. Sometimes people spend a great deal of time praying before the Blessed Sacrament but struggle to forgive a family member, reconcile with a neighbour, or speak kindly to others. St. Paul reminds us that true Eucharistic devotion includes love for the Mystical Body of Christ – the community of believers gathered around the altar.

Today's feast also invites us to examine the way we receive Holy Communion. Sadly, there is always a danger that receiving Communion can become a routine. We may come forward automatically without preparing our hearts.

The Church teaches us that before receiving Holy Communion, we should examine our conscience and seek reconciliation with God if we are conscious of grave sin. St. Paul gives a serious warning: "Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup." Holy Communion is not an ordinary meal. It is a sacred encounter with the living Lord. Therefore, we should approach the altar with faith, humility, reverence, and gratitude.

My dear brothers and sisters, what a privilege we have as Catholics! The Lord of heaven and earth chooses to remain with us in the Eucharist. He comes to us in every Mass. He waits for us in every tabernacle. He strengthens us in our struggles, comforts us in our sorrows, and nourishes us for our journey to eternal life.

On this Feast of Corpus Christi, let us renew our faith in the Real Presence of Jesus. Let us participate in the Holy Mass with greater devotion. Let us spend time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. And let us receive Holy Communion with hearts that are prepared, grateful, and full of love.

May the Eucharist always be the centre of our lives, our families, and our parish community.

Let us conclude with the beautiful prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas:

"O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine."

Amen.