

- Today we celebrate the solemnity of *Corpus Christi*--the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ —the Eucharist...the unmatched gift of God to mankind, the “sacrament of sacraments”, the source and summit of the Christian life.
- The Second Vatican Council wrote: *“The other sacraments, as well as with every ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate, are tied together with the Eucharist and are directed toward it. The Most Blessed Eucharist contains the entire spiritual good of the Church, that is, Christ himself...”* (Prebyterorum Ordinis, 5)
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- Thus the Mass is THE most important thing that we do every week, for it is the perfect worship of--and sacrifice to--God the Creator...and touches upon our eternal life and the life of the world most directly. No other prayer or action even remotely approaches the magnitude or efficacy or importance of the Mass.
- And within the Mass, the Eucharist is the primary reason we come together in this worship, for it IS that perfect sacrifice of Christ.
- We come to hear the word of God, of course...but the pinnacle of the celebration is the sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ...in obedience to Jesus’ command: *“Do this in memory of me”*...this greatest source of grace which He instituted on the very eve of His crucifixion.
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- Because Christ’s Body and Blood remain under the form of bread and wine, even some Catholics do not realize what it really is.
- But we consume no bread or wine in Mass. After the words of consecration, only the appearance of bread and wine remain; those elements we consume are now the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ...and our worthy partaking of them is truly a communion with God, for Jesus is God.
- Why do we believe all this? After all, the host still looks like bread; what’s in the chalice still looks like wine.

- But in His divinity--and His humility--He veils Himself under the form of these simplest of foods—and yet becomes the sustenance of eternal life. We do not so much consume Him as He consumes us.
- And as God does not submit Himself to measure or scale, nor does He submit Himself to our senses, or to the crudity and indignity of chemical analysis. He calls upon our faith and our trust in Him.
- And so we believe...because at the Last Supper, Jesus (God) Himself affirms: *“This is my Body; this is my Blood”* ...ordaining His apostles as His priests with those words: *“Do this in memory of me.”* And though the senses say “nay”, our faith worldwide shouts out: Aye! Oui! Si! Ja! Hai! Tak! Vâng! Yes, I believe!
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- Hard to understand, yes; this is why so many of His disciples abandoned Him in John 6 as He spoke of the necessity of consuming His flesh and blood for salvation
- And so Jesus asked the apostles: *“Do you also wish to go away?”* In other words: *“Do you not have faith in me either?”*
- But Peter tells Him: *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”* (John 6:67-69)
- And we hear in our second reading that this is exactly what the early Church believed and practiced, as St. Paul writes: *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?”* (1Corinthians 10:16).
- And later: *Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord...anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.* (1Corinthians 11:23-29)
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- St. Thomas Aquinas wrote: *“No other sacrament has greater healing power; through it sins are purged, virtues are increased, and the soul is enriched with an abundance of every spiritual gift.”*
- Thus the Mass and the Eucharist is simultaneously both the perfect worship of God, and the supreme gift of grace to Man.
- That is why it is one of the first sacraments received after baptism; that is why it is to be the last sacrament received before death.
- We receive this food of angels in our earthen vessels...a privilege wholly unmerited...wholly unmatched.
- Realizing all this, when you receive the Eucharist, let your “Amen” truly mean: “Yes...I believe!”

Reading 1 [Dt 8:2-3, 14b-16a](#)

Moses said to the people:

"Remember how for forty years now the LORD, your God,
has directed all your journeying in the desert,
so as to test you by affliction
and find out whether or not it was your intention
to keep his commandments.
He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger,
and then fed you with manna,
a food unknown to you and your fathers,
in order to show you that not by bread alone does one live,
but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the LORD.
"Do not forget the LORD, your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
that place of slavery;
who guided you through the vast and terrible desert
with its saraph serpents and scorpions,
its parched and waterless ground;
who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock
and fed you in the desert with manna,
a food unknown to your fathers."

Responsorial Psalm [147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20](#)

R. (12) Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Glorify the LORD, O Jerusalem;
praise your God, O Zion.
For he has strengthened the bars of your gates;
he has blessed your children within you.

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

or:

R. Alleluia.

He has granted peace in your borders;
with the best of wheat he fills you.
He sends forth his command to the earth;
swiftly runs his word!

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

or:

R. Alleluia.

He has proclaimed his word to Jacob,
his statutes and his ordinances to Israel.

He has not done thus for any other nation;
his ordinances he has not made known to them. Alleluia.

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Reading II [1 Cor 10:16-17](#)

Brothers and sisters:

The cup of blessing that we bless,
is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?
The bread that we break,
is it not a participation in the body of Christ?
Because the loaf of bread is one,
we, though many, are one body,
for we all partake of the one loaf.

Gospel [Jn 6:51-58](#)

Jesus said to the Jewish crowds:

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven;
whoever eats this bread will live forever;
and the bread that I will give
is my flesh for the life of the world."

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying,
"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Jesus said to them,

"Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,
you do not have life within you.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
has eternal life,
and I will raise him on the last day.

For my flesh is true food,
and my blood is true drink.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him.

Just as the living Father sent me
and I have life because of the Father,
so also the one who feeds on me
will have life because of me.

This is the bread that came down from heaven.

Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died,
whoever eats this bread will live forever."