

Solemnity of Corpus Christi

May 28-29, 2016 Year "B"

Readings: Genesis 14: 18-20; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26; Luke 9: 11-17

Laud, O Zion, your salvation
Laud with hymns of exaltation,
Christ, your king and shepherd true.

Sight has failed, nor thought conceives,
But a dauntless faith believes,
Resting on a power divine.

Here beneath these signs are hidden
Priceless things to sense forbidden;
Signs, not things are all we see

These words taken from the ancient hymn in honor of the Eucharist, the *Lauda Sion*, express in poetic terms what we can only know through faith. In keeping with the ancient axiom that the Law of Prayer is the Law of Belief (*Lex orandi, lex credendi*), I think it is fair to say that this hymn beautifully expresses a deep faith in the tremendous gift that the Eucharist provides. It is truly a priceless gift, as the hymn aptly says. Therefore, if it is our most precious gift and possession, we must treat it as such.

Because our eyes cannot see anything out of the ordinary, it will remain a constant temptation to speak and treat the Eucharist in a manner less than it is due. The Church has taught that we may rightly adore the Holy Sacrament because it is truly the flesh and blood of the Lord, sacramentally present.

Sight has failed, nor thought conceives. No, our sight has not failed—we know what the naked eye sees. The eyes of faith tell us something different, or do they? Has our faith failed too? Do we dare to believe this seeming absurdity—that God can change simple gifts of bread and wine into something else—namely the flesh and blood of the Lord?

If God can make the moon and the stars, and create the entire world out of nothing, can he not also make the body of His Son present to us sacramentally in the Eucharist? Why is this so difficult to comprehend, when we believe so much beyond our understanding?

I know so little about how things work in this modern society of ours, yet I trust. I trust the accumulated wisdom of doctors from centuries past; I trust airplane pilots, dentists, auto mechanics. I refuse to live my life withholding trust from any and all with whom I come into contact. Once we admit this fundamental fact, it falls into place.

How much more so with my Lord and Savior. What is the cost of refusing to believe? Are you willing to go it alone? Perhaps, but I know that I cannot. Knowing that the Lord Jesus is with me in a real and tangible way each time I receive this sacred banquet is of absolute importance to me~ it gives me comfort and meaning.

CCC~ When receiving Holy Communion you are really receiving the body and blood, soul and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine. If you find that hard to believe, keep in mind that Jesus himself had difficulty explaining the teaching to his disciples. I am thinking of the passage in John chapter 6:60 where after a long discourse where he quite clearly says, “My flesh is real food, my blood is real drink.”

Some disciples began murmuring amongst themselves, “These words are hard to endure. How can anyone take it seriously?” These disciples broke away, and Jesus turned to his Twelve and said, “Do you wish to leave me too?” Notice, he did not go after them. Now it would seem that if I were only speaking figuratively about the Eucharist and someone said, “These words are hard to endure,” I would surely stop them and clarify that they were misunderstanding. But Jesus doesn’t do that does he?

Other Christians have retained most, some, or very little of the traditional Catholic belief which basically remained unchallenged for the first 1500 years of the history of the Church. Many other teachings were denied at various times concerning Jesus, his humanity and divinity etc., but never the Eucharist, not seriously.

This feast is of vital importance because we must remember that we have held fast to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and that we can only take this on faith. The Eucharist has never been a teaching that stands out clearly to the mind, unaided by grace or faith.

Many moral teachings just make sense on their own. We see the intrinsic value of fidelity for instance, how it is only good for a relationship. To see the Eucharist with the eyes of faith though requires more. The eyes of faith see beyond what the sense can perceive-that what is really present is the presence of Christ, body, soul, and divinity. Why?

Why did Christ give us this great gift? So that each time we receive it, we can become more like Christ, by allowing his very person to unite with ours, so that we can become a little more God like, and a little less focused on ourselves. How can we run to the Church parking lot, and not be just a little different when Christ has just entered our life in a unique way. Just because you cannot see his presence does not mean that he isn't there. Of course he is.

When you come up in the communion line, ask each time for a greater faith in this greatest of mysteries. Don't cheat yourself by watering down the doctrine, "Oh it can't be!!" If God can create this beautiful world, create all that we see, is it beyond him to allow his son to be present beneath the appearance of ordinary food? Let God be God. It is not for us to question his motives. It is for us to thank him for his generosity, and to become more like Christ every day.