

Corpus Christi Year “A”  
June 13-14, 2020

*Hidden God, devoutly I adore you.*

Readings: Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14-16; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; John 6:51-58

At my home parish of Nativity of our Lord, we too had a baldachin, albeit not supported by six 24-foot, columns (8-tons each) of black and gold Portora marble and a bronze canopy. It was rather made of wood. But above the baldachin, amidst many symbols in the church, you could see words are carved in wood and painted in gold. For many years, I saw these words when glancing upwards: *Adoro te devote, latens deitas.*

Only while in High School Latin would those words finally resonate. “Devoutly I adore Thee, hidden God.” Even though I had not understood while younger, a combination of the faith taught and modelled for me helped me to live the truth of those words each and every day. They come from a text composed at the request Pope Urban IV for the newly established Feast of Corpus Christi. He hand-picked Thomas Aquinas to write the liturgical texts, including the hymns for the feast.

In every stanza there is a theological affirmation and an invocation which is the humble response of the soul to the mystery. The theological truth recalled in the first stanza refers to the manner of the presence of Christ in the Eucharistic species.

When we receive the Bread of Angels, we are transformed more and more in the likeness of Jesus. St. Thomas also wrote so beautifully of this mystery in the Eucharistic hymn sung at Benediction, the *Pange Lingua*: “Faith supplies what the senses cannot perceive.”<sup>1</sup>

St. Gregory wrote that to adore is to raise “a hymn of silence” to God. Indeed, when we adore devoutly, we are praising God in silence.<sup>2</sup> To be devout means that we are serious about our faith. It is not an add-on to our daily life, but it is the framework out of which we construct our lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Praestet fides supplementum, sensuum defectui

<sup>2</sup> Gregory of Nazianzen, Dogmatic Poems, PG 37, 507-8. Quoted in Fr. Cantalamessa, Advent Sermon 6 Dec. 2004.

While Jesus may be hidden in the Eucharist under the appearance of bread, He is here truly here. And he comes into our souls to give us strength and healing.

So why do we receive the Eucharist? The answer is simple. We receive the Eucharist so that we may be changed to become more like Jesus. Think about it for a moment. If we became more like Jesus, what would be different in our lives? We would look the same, our voices would sound the same. But our words might be very different. Would we yell and scream, would we use foul language or insult others?

The difference would be noticeable to others, even though on the surface, we would look exactly the same. The difference would signal that we have changed. [To our First Communicants, today represents a special day in your lives. In a real way, today you will be changed in the best possible way. Same name, same address, same clothing, same toys, same bed in which you sleep. But you will have a new and best friend to be with you in a new way. We are all rejoicing today with you.]

Jesus Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist to give believers the power they need to remain alive in His love and His grace. Thomas Aquinas explained, “it is evident that the dimensions of the bread or wine are not changed into the dimensions of the body of Christ, but substance into substance.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, He is hidden, but he really is. Jesus enters into our souls, so that we become more and more like Jesus.

While desiring to understand the Eucharist intellectually is praiseworthy, we will always come up short. God is beyond our categories, and while our words teach Truth, they cannot fully encompass the Truth of His love. Today, we bow before the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, offering our prayers of thanksgiving, basking in His presence. In the process, we will be changed and transformed more and more into the likeness of Jesus.

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<sup>3</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, (III,76, 1, ad 3)