

Homily of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Year B

Jesus celebrated the first Eucharist during the Last Supper. As we read in the Gospel, "He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take it; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they drank from it. He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.'"

Jesus did not say, "It is like my body." Or, "It represents my body." He said, "This is my body." "This is my blood." This is why we believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. This is why we adore the Body of Jesus in the Tabernacle. When we come into a Catholic Church, we see a tabernacle and a tabernacle light, we know, immediately, that the Eucharist is present in the tabernacle; we genuflect in reverence. Jesus is no longer physically with us, but he has left himself spiritually with us in the Eucharist.

The Mass is the highest prayer of the Catholic Church. The Mass is not a service, but a Eucharistic celebration. The feast of today is the center of the Catholic Faith. The Holy Eucharist is the most distinctive mark of the Catholic Church. We must guard it with pride, respect, honor and reverence. Someone advised priests and indeed all of us, "Take each Mass as your first Mass, your last Mass and your only Mass." This means that we are required to give every Mass our maximum attention, participation and prayers.

We are to receive the Eucharist with honor, adoration and worthily. We must not disregard what St Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:28-29, "Let each one, then, examine himself before eating of the bread and drinking of the cup. Otherwise he drinks his own condemnation in not recognizing the body." This is why the Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us to prepare for the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

We receive many graces when we participate at Mass:

One: The Eucharist is food for our spiritual journey. The Eucharist gives us spiritual nourishment. We suffer spiritual malnutrition when we deny our soul the Eucharist. However, not everyone receives the Eucharist at Mass. Therefore, the word of God that everyone receives is also food for our spiritual journey. Psalm 118:105 says, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, and a light for my path."

Two: In Eucharistic celebration are powerful prayers for our sanctification and salvation.

Three: In Eucharistic celebration are powerful prayers for our physical and spiritual healing. That is why we make effort to take communion to the sick that are unable to come to Mass, and we pray for their strength and healing.

Four: In Eucharistic celebration are powerful prayers for liberation from the influence of the Evil One and all forces of darkness.

Five: In Eucharistic celebration is our spiritual union and banquet with the Trinity, the angels and the saints. It is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet after our life here on earth.

Six: The Eucharist has transformative power. It gives us the graces to become whom we receive.

Seven: God answers many prayers during Eucharistic celebration. This is why we are encouraged to offer Mass for various intentions. We have already noted above that the Mass is the highest prayer of the Catholic Church.

Eight: During Eucharistic celebration, souls in purgatory are released into heavenly freedom. This is why we celebrate funeral Mass and Mass for the souls of our departed ones, imploring God to forgive them their sins and welcome them into heaven.

The many benefits of the Eucharistic celebration should encourage us to participate actively and attentively in the celebration.

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