

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, we celebrate the feast of “Corpus et Sanguis Christi,” “The Body and Blood of Christ.” It was a humble nun in Belgium, Saint Juliana (1258) who first suggested and advocated a special feast in honor of the Blessed Sacrament. In a vision, Christ directed her to announce to the authorities of the Church that God wished to establish a feast in honor of the Most Blessed Sacrament. In 1230 Juliana communicated her secret to a small group of learned theologians.

On September 8, 1264, six years after Juliana's death, Pope Urban IV (1261-1265) established for the whole Church the feast in honor of the Most Holy Eucharist. It was to be celebrated with great solemnity on the Thursday after Pentecost. It is now celebrated on the Sunday after the feast of the Most Holy trinity. The bull of Pope Urban IV had no immediate effect because he died soon after its publication, and the succeeding popes did not urge the matter. Finally, Pope Clement V, in 1314, renewed the decree in a bull of his own, and then the feast spread quickly throughout the Latin Church. Later it was also accepted by some parts of the Oriental Church.

Today, the Sunday after Trinity Sunday, is dedicated to reflect on the meaning and the power of the Eucharist that we celebrate every Sunday and some of us every day. The celebration of the Eucharist is at the heart of every Catholic Christian Community. The Eucharist forms, shapes and transforms the Church and holds us together as a community of faith, heals our brokenness and empowers us to fulfill the mission of Jesus. In the Eucharist, what we eat is no longer bread and what we drink no longer wine. It is the whole person of Jesus that we take in.

The “bread and the wine” of the Eucharist transforms us into Christ. We become the Body of Christ in communion with our brothers and sisters. We are not just in communion with those we see present with us in our Church, but with men and women whom we will never meet, speaking languages that we will never understand, as well as with those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith. Eucharist is Christ present and the Church present.

All our Christian and missionary activity is taken up into the Eucharist and nourished and strengthened by the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the wellspring of our hope and our courage. We come to the Eucharist to be nourished and strengthened. We go from the Eucharist to fulfill our mission. Some of us make the mistake of treating the Eucharist as a sacred thing, others as a devotional practice and still others as an obligation. Eucharist is a person...it is Jesus...His Body and His Blood...His whole person...what he taught, the way he lived and the way died and rose

again. With a person, we can develop a relationship which is dynamic - healing, consoling, loving and serving. The Eucharist calls us to enter into personal and intimate relationship with Jesus and his body, the Church. In the Eucharist, Jesus is presented as the bread of Life and the wine of compassion. To eat this bread and to drink this wine means to take Jesus in and let him transform our life. The bread we eat and the wine we drink are digested and assimilated into the whole body. The Eucharist calls us to let Jesus, our bread of life and our cup of compassion, enter our whole being and transform our life...in this process of transformation, his way becomes our way, his truth becomes our truth and his life becomes our life. The Eucharist is a life-transforming experience.

The Eucharist is not a ritual being performed by a priest for his people. The Eucharist is a sacred meal of communion, of togetherness, of thanksgiving, of sacrifice and of total giving. To eat the flesh and to drink the blood of Jesus is to take in the whole person of Jesus - to take Jesus in and let him transform us. Eucharist is a life-altering, life-redeeming, and life-transforming gift. The Eucharist is not a "mere memorial", a recalling of events. It is a very profound "Confession", an affirmation, and a profession of the presence of the crucified, ascended, and risen Lord in communion.

**The Eucharist is the completion, the crowning, and the fulfillment of Christ's love.
Let Jesus in and let him transform you!**

The Eucharist is not a thing to be adored and walked away, but a person to love and serve and a person who loves us and serves us. Experiencing this creative love should change us and make us anxious to spread that love in our everyday lives. The Eucharist demands that we love one another as the Lord loves us and enter into unbreakable bond of love with others, especially with the less privileged and the marginalized in our community.

The Eucharistic celebration concludes with a mission: "Go, in peace, to love and serve the Lord" Or "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord" Or "Go in peace glorifying the Lord by your life" Or something similar. Communion is not the end of the celebration - mission is. Sacred intimacy with the Lord is not the final moment of Eucharistic life. The Eucharist empowers us to go out into the world and proclaim the good news of Jesus. The Eucharist calls us to move from communion to community, to fellowship, to mission and to ministry. What we have seen and heard and tasted is not just for ourselves. Don't wait, don't hesitate - Go and tell all.

Take a few moments this week to reflect on your own experience of the Eucharist. Has your understanding of the Eucharist deepened over the years? Has the Eucharist been a sacrament of forgiveness, healing and transformation for you and a channel of communion with others?

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

June 2, 2024

Dear friends, build your house on rock.

Try each day to follow Christ's word.

Listen to him as a true friend with whom you can share your path in life.

With him at your side, you will find courage and hope to face difficulties and problems, and even to overcome disappointments and setbacks.

(Pope Benedict XVI)

Collect

O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament
have left us a memorial of your Passion,
grant us, we pray,
so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood
that we may always experience in ourselves
the fruits of your redemption.
Who live and reign with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Liturgy of the Word

Prayerfully read the first reading and then read my reflections below and spend a few moments of personal reflection. Do the same with Responsorial Psalm and other readings.

**Let us strive to nurture forbearance as our virtue and let it form
and shape and transform our character as disciples of Jesus.**

Exodus 24:3-8

This excerpt from Exodus relates how Moses sprinkled the blood of the holocaust on the people to seal the covenant. A holocaust was a whole, burnt offering – the animal was completely destroyed as a symbol of the total gift of those making the sacrifice. The blood of the sacrificed animals was sprinkled on both altar and the people while Moses declared it to be the blood of

the covenant with God. By virtue of that blood, Israel was bound to God and God to Israel as one family. God and God's people entered into a covenantal relationship.

Blood was sacred to Jews. Blood was used to seal and ratify the covenant because of its sacredness. "The life of the flesh is in the blood. I have put it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your lives, for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life within it" (Leviticus 17:11). Since it was believed that life resided in the blood, Moses' action of sprinkling on the Altar, which represented God, and on the people, was in effect a solemn statement concerning the power of the covenant to bring together the Giver of life with those to whom that life was given. Sealed by the blood, the covenant, the bond of relationship became irrevocable.

We are a covenant people. God has established an irrevocable covenant with us. Be grateful and be faithful.

Psalm 116

This Psalm is probably composed by a convert confessing that he has found the God of Israel his "rock" and he is taking refuge in this God. He has also found the people of God, the faithful ones, to be a delight to be with. He muses, "how wonderful...what pleasure" to know faithful people! And he promises not to associate with the ungodly. He affirms his faith in the God of Israel as everything for him. He says, "Yahweh is all I have" and "Yahweh will lead me to life".

**To you will I offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving
And I will call upon the name of the Lord.
My vows to the Lord I will pay,
In the presence of all the people.....**

Hebrews 9:11-15

The author compares the Sinai covenant, sealed with the blood of bulls and goats, with the new and eternal covenant established by the sacrifice of Jesus, sealed with his own blood. As the perfect high priest, Jesus offered the sacrifice of his very self in order to establish the new covenant. This sacrifice of Jesus created an eternal, unbreakable bond between God and us; a bond built on forgiving, healing love.

Special sacrifices were offered in the temple on Yom Kippur to atone for the sins of the priests and people. Only on that one day through the whole year would the high priest enter the Holy of Holies, the most sacred part of the temple sanctuary. This is the custom that is referenced in this excerpt. Unlike the high priests who preceded him, Jesus, who was sinless, had no need to atone for his own sins, but only for the sins of all humankind. And unlike the high priests before

him, Jesus did not sacrifice bulls or goats, but his very self in order to establish the new covenant. Jesus' perfect sacrifice achieved eternal redemption.

God has established an irrevocable covenant with us in Jesus. Be grateful and be faithful.

Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

Mark gives us a description of the institution of the Eucharist within the context of the Passover meal. Mark associates the dying and passing of Jesus with the Passover event. In Jesus, those who have been enslaved by sin are freed...they pass over from sin to forgiveness, healing and new life. In dying, Jesus became the perfect sacrifice, the ultimate paschal lamb, by whose blood, we are delivered from death and the new covenant is established between God and us.

Through the gift of himself as food, bread and wine, body and blood, we are nurtured and sustained to, faithfully, live the new and eternal covenant. The bread and the cup Jesus offered was not simply a sign of his desire to give or to share. Bread and wine became body and blood, the whole person, in total giving. Just as God becomes fully present to us in Jesus, Jesus becomes fully present to us in the bread and the wine of the Eucharist.

The Passover was designed to enable every Israelite to go through the drama of divinely directed freedom. The meal was shared in a reclining position, appropriate to the status of free men who had experienced a great liberation. The Last supper was different. Jesus said: "This piece of bread is my Body" - this piece of bread is my very self, no longer in type, but in reality. Therefore, when you eat it, you are no longer eating a symbol, a foreshadowing of a future reality. You are eating my very self. Whenever, you eat this, remember that I am truly present in it and therefore in you. I am real – In you, here and now. You eat me and you become my body. In the Eucharist, the Church becomes the body of Christ – the Church becomes His presence.

To eat the flesh and to drink the blood of Jesus is to take in the whole person of Jesus....To take Jesus in and let him transform us. In this eating and drinking, we are brought into communion with Christ and with the whole body of Christ. The gift of Jesus as bread was and continues to be a challenge to all followers of Jesus. Eucharist is a sacred meal of communion, of togetherness, of thanksgiving, of sacrifice, of total giving. Eucharist is a life-altering, life-transforming gift and a redeeming, life-giving, fulfilling and joy-filled celebration.

The Eucharist is, therefore, the completion, the crowning, and the fulfillment of Christ's love. Let Jesus in and let him transform you!

Be Still for a few moments!

Pray for your needs and those of your family and community.

Spiritual Communion

Lord Jesus, I believe in your real presence in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of the Altar. I place myself in your presence and adore you, worship you and glorify you. I am unable to receive you in Holy Communion at Mass today. I hunger and thirst for your way, your truth and your life. Come into my heart Lord and satisfy my hunger and quench my thirst. Bless me that I may give witness to your presence in my life. Amen

Be Still for a few moments!

Saint of the Day, June 2 - Saints Erasmus and 21 other saints are remembered this day.

We do not have any information about the early life of Erasmus. He is known as Erasmus of Formia and also known as Saint Elmo, who was martyred in the year 303 during the persecution of Diocletian. He is not to be confused with a Syrian bishop Erasmus of Antioch. He is venerated as the patron saint of sailors and abdominal pain. Erasmus or Elmo is also one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers, saintly figures of Christian tradition who are venerated especially as intercessors.

Erasmus was Bishop of Formia, Italy. During the persecution against Christians under the emperor Diocletian (284-305), he left his diocese and went to Mount Libanus, where he hid for seven years. However, an angel is said to have appeared to him, and counseled him to return to his city. On the way, he met some soldiers and admitted that he was a Christian and they brought him to trial at Antioch before the emperor Diocletian. After terrible tortures, he was bound with chains and thrown into prison. Legend claims that an angel released him, and he departed for Illyricum, eventually suffered a martyr's death around the year 303.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

