

Orantes

Newsletter of the Office for Divine Worship
of the Diocese of Worcester

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Corpus Christi 2022

OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
160 Mechanic Street
Leominster, MA 01453

508-798-0417
ofworship@worcesterdiocese.org

Monsignor James P. Moroney
Director

Reverend Alfredo Porras
Associate Director

Elizabeth Marcil
Associate Director

Deacon Colin Novick
Assistant Director

The Diocesan Phase of the three-year Eucharistic Revival called for by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops begins on Sunday, 19 June 2022 with the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi). This feast provides the first opportunity to begin our work of reviving Eucharistic practice and belief.

EUCCHARISTIC PRACTICE

The revival of Eucharistic practice is in response to a real decline in participation at Mass in the Northeastern part of the United States over the past several decades, a decline recently exacerbated by the pandemic.

By way of example, the November pew count conducted annually by the Diocese of Worcester shows a drastic, if unsurprising, drop in Mass attendance with the advent of the pandemic in 2020. Unfortunately, the pandemic has merely

accelerated an already well established decline in numbers of folks at Mass.

EUCCHARISTIC BELIEF

At the same time, various polls have indicated a lack of belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist by many Catholics. Most recently, in November of 2021, *The Pillar* media outlet commissioned a “Survey on Religious Attitudes and Practices” with the marketing research firm *Centiment*. Asking people to respond to the question “I believe the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ,” they reported that 50% of Catholics who attend Mass weekly replied in the affirmative.



POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD

The Eucharistic Revival Working Group established by the Bishop in January of this year¹ continues to pursue concrete remedies to these dilemmas through Catechesis, Evangelization and, most significantly, revival of Eucharistic Celebrations. In anticipation of these initiatives, priests and their collaborators are urged to give particular attention to preparing for authentic and effective celebrations of Corpus Christi as we anticipate these important pastoral initiatives.

CORPUS CHRISTI

This issue of *Orantes* provides resources designed to assist you in preparing a fulsome celebration of Corpus Christi in your parish this year. We recommend a particular emphasis on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the centrality of the Mass as the source and summit of the Christian Life. Eucharistic processions and promotion of Eucharistic adoration in the days and weeks surrounding Corpus Christi will also help us to introduce a sustained promotion of Eucharistic practice and belief during the upcoming Diocesan Phase of the three-year Eucharistic Revival.

¹ cf. *Orantes*, January 2022.

Finally, we recommend that on the feast of Corpus Christi a simple pamphlet on basic Eucharistic belief be distributed to all the faithful. The pamphlet *Eucharist: Sacrament of Faith*, is available from [Our Sunday Visitor](https://www.orderosv.com/product/eucharist-sacrament-of-faith-2) at <https://www.orderosv.com/product/eucharist-sacrament-of-faith-2> or by calling 800-348-2440.

CONTENTS

HOMILY NOTES

Pope Benedict XVI on the Readings	page 4
Our Bishops on Real presence	page 9
The Saints on Real Presence	page 12
Notes on the Corpus Christi Sequence	page 14
A Simple Homily for Corpus Christi	page 16

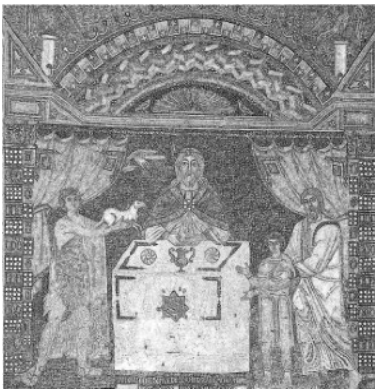
WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARIST

Nine Questions on Adoration	page 18
The Structure of Adoration	page 21
Eucharistic Processions	page 24



Homily Notes

POPE BENEDICT XVI ON THE READINGS²



The priesthood of the New Testament is closely linked to the Eucharist. For this reason today, on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi...we are invited to meditate on the relationship between the Eucharist and the priesthood of Christ. We are also oriented to this direction by the First Reading and the Responsorial Psalm that present Melchizedek. The brief passage from the Book of Genesis³ says that Melchizedek, King of Salem, was "priest of God Most High" and therefore "brought out bread and wine" and "blessed him [Abram]", who had just returned after winning a battle. Abram himself gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything. In the last verse, the Psalm in turn contains solemn words, sworn by God himself who declares to the Messiah-King: "You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek;"⁴ thus the Messiah is not only proclaimed King but also Priest. It is from this passage that the author of the Letter to the Hebrews drew for his broad and articulate explanation. And we have re-echoed it in the refrain: "You are a priest for ever" Christ the Lord: almost a profession of faith that acquires special significance on today's Feast. It is the joy of the community, the joy of the whole Church which, in contemplating and adoring the Most Holy Sacrament, recognizes in it the real and permanent presence of Jesus, the Eternal High Priest.

The Second Reading and the Gospel focus attention on the Eucharistic mystery instead. From the First Reading of the Letter to the Corinthians⁵ is taken the fundamental passage in which St Paul reminds this community of the meaning and value of the "Lord's Supper", which the Apostle had transmitted and taught and which risked being lost. Whereas the Gospel is St Luke's version of the account of the miracle

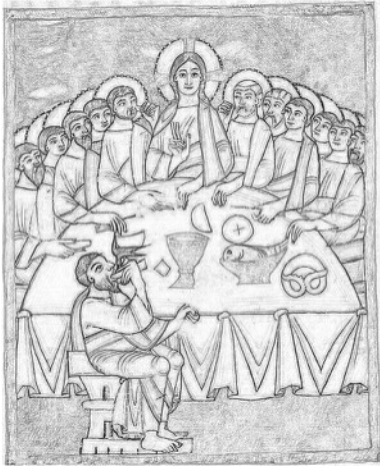
² Pope Benedict XVI, Corpus Christi 2010.

³ cf. 14: 18-20.

⁴ Psalm 110 [109]: 4.

⁵ cf. 11: 23-26.

of the loaves and fishes: a sign attested to by all the Evangelists and that foretells the gift that Christ was to make of himself in order to give to all humanity eternal life. Both these texts highlight the prayer of Christ, in the act of breaking bread. There is of course a clear difference between the two moments: when he breaks the loaves and fishes for the crowds, Jesus thanks the heavenly Father for his providence, trusting that he will not let the people go hungry. In the Last Supper, instead, Jesus transforms the bread and wine into his own Body and Blood so that the disciples may be nourished by him and live in close and real communion with him.



The first thing always to remember is that Jesus was not a priest in accordance with the Jewish tradition. He did not come from a family of priests. He did not belong to the lineage of Aaron but rather that of Judah and was therefore legally barred from taking the path of the priesthood. Jesus of Nazareth himself and his activities do not follow in the wake of the ancient priests but rather in that of the prophets. And in this line Jesus took his distance from the ritual conception of religion, criticizing the structure that gave value to human precepts linked to ritual purity rather than to the observance of God's commandments: namely, love of God and of one's neighbor which, as the Lord says, "is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."⁶ Even in the Temple of Jerusalem, a sacred place par excellence, Jesus makes an exquisitely prophetic gesture when he drives out the money changers and livestock vendors, all things that served for offering the traditional sacrifices. Thus Jesus was not recognized as a priestly but rather as a prophetic and royal Messiah. Even his death, which we Christians rightly call a "sacrifice", had nothing to do with the ancient sacrifices; indeed, it was quite the opposite; it was the execution of a death sentence by crucifixion, the most ignominious punishment, which took place outside the walls of Jerusalem. In what sense, therefore, was Jesus a priest? The Eucharist itself tells us. We can start with the simple words that describe Melchizedek: He "brought out bread and wine" (Gen 14: 18).

⁶ Mark 12: 33.



This is what Jesus did at the Last Supper: he offered bread and wine and in that action recapitulated the whole of himself and his whole mission. That gesture, the prayer that preceded it and the words with which he accompanied it contain the full meaning of the mystery of Christ, as the Letter to the Hebrews expresses it in a crucial passage that we should quote: "In the days of his flesh", the author writes of Our Lord, "Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek."⁷ In this text, which clearly alludes to the spiritual agony of Gethsemane, Christ's Passion is presented as a prayer and an offering. Jesus faces his "hour" which leads him to death on the Cross, immersed in a profound prayer that consists of the union of his own will with that of the Father. This dual yet single will is a will of love. Lived in this prayer, the tragic trial that Jesus faces is transformed into an offering, into a living sacrifice.

The Letter to the Hebrews says that Jesus "was heard". In what sense? In the sense that God the Father liberated him from death and restored him to life. He was heard precisely because of his total abandonment of himself to the Father's will: God's plan of love could be perfectly fulfilled in Jesus who, having obeyed to the end, to his death on the Cross, became a "cause of salvation" for all who obey him. In other words, he became the High Priest for having taken upon himself all the sin of the world, as the "Lamb of God". It is the Father who confers this priesthood upon him at the very moment in which Jesus passes over from his death to his Resurrection. He is not a priest according to the Mosaic law,⁸ but "after the order of Melchizedek", according to a prophetic order, dependent only on his special relationship with God.

⁷ Genesis 5: 8-10.

⁸ cf. Leviticus 8-9.

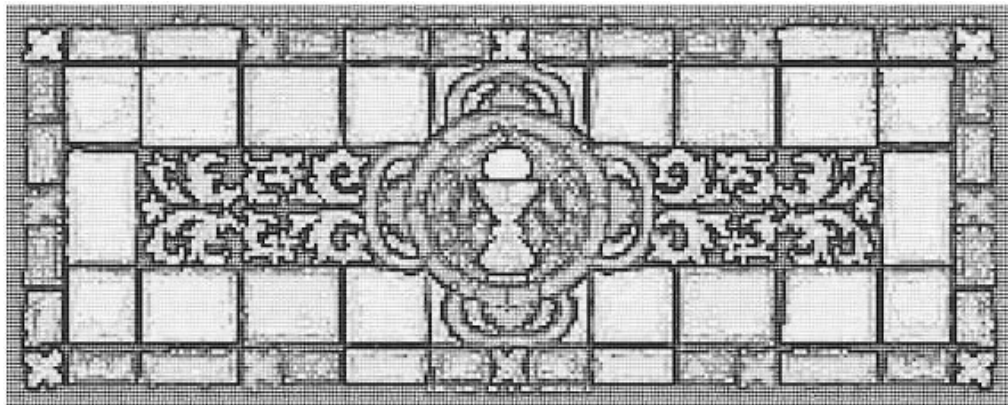


Let us return to the words of the Letter to the Hebrews which say: "Although he was a Son he learned obedience through what he suffered". Christ's priesthood entailed suffering. Jesus truly suffered and did so for our sake. He was the Son and did not need to learn obedience but we do, we did need to and we always will. Therefore the Son took upon himself our humanity and for our sake he let himself be "taught" obedience in the crucible of suffering, he let himself be transformed by it like the grain of wheat that has to die in the earth in order to bear fruit. By means of this process Jesus was "made perfect" in Greek, *teleiotheis*. We must pause to reflect on this term because it is very important. It indicates the fulfillment of a journey, that is, the very journey and transformation of the Son of God through suffering, through his painful Passion. It is through this transformation that Jesus Christ became the "high priest" and can save all who entrust themselves to him. The term *teleiotheis*, correctly translated by the words "made perfect", belongs to a verbal root which, in the Greek version of the Pentateuch, that is, the first five Books of the Bible, is always used to mean the consecration of the ancient priests. This discovery is very valuable because it tells us that for Jesus the Passion was like a priestly consecration. He was not a priest according to the Law but became one existentially in his Pasch of Passion, death and Resurrection: he gave himself in expiation and the Father, exalting him above every creature, made him the universal Mediator of salvation.

Let us return in our meditation, to the Eucharist that will shortly be the focus of our liturgical assembly. In it, Jesus anticipated his Sacrifice, a non-ritual but a personal sacrifice. At the Last Supper his actions were prompted by that "eternal spirit" with which he was later to offer himself on the Cross.⁹ Giving thanks and blessing, Jesus transforms the bread and the wine. It is divine love that transforms them: the love with which Jesus accepts, in anticipation, to give the whole of himself for us. This love is nothing other than the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, who consecrates the bread and the wine and changes their substance into the Body

⁹ cf. Hebrews 9: 14.

and Blood of the Lord, making present in the Sacrament the same sacrifice that is fulfilled in a bloody way on the Cross. We may therefore conclude that Christ is a true and effective priest because he was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, he was filled with the whole fullness of God's love and precisely "in the night on which he was betrayed", precisely, "in the hour... of darkness."¹⁰ It is this divine power, the same power that brought about the Incarnation of the Word, that transformed the extreme violence and extreme injustice into a supreme act of love and justice. This is the work of the priesthood of Christ which the Church inherited and extended in history, in the dual form of the common priesthood of the baptized and the ordained priesthood of ministers, in order to transform the world with God's love. Let us all, priests and faithful, nourish ourselves with the same Eucharist, let us all prostrate ourselves to adore it, because in it our Master and Lord is present, the true Body of Jesus is present in it, the Victim and the Priest, the salvation of the world. Come let us exult with joyful songs! Come, let us adore him! Amen.



¹⁰ cf. Luke 22: 53.

Homily Notes

OUR BISHOPS ON REAL PRESENCE¹¹



18. From the very beginning, the Church has believed and celebrated according to the teaching of Jesus himself:

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.¹² It is not “ordinary bread and ordinary drink” that we receive in the Eucharist, but the flesh and blood of Christ, who came to nourish and transform us, to restore our relationship to God and to one another.¹³

19. In the Eucharist, with the eyes of faith we see before us Jesus Christ, who, in the Incarnation became flesh¹⁴ and who in the Paschal Mystery gave himself for us,¹⁵ accepting even death on a cross.¹⁶ St. John Chrysostom preached that when you see the Body of Christ “set before you [on the altar], say to yourself: Because of this Body I am no longer earth and ashes, no longer a prisoner, but free: because of this I hope for heaven, and to receive the good things therein, immortal life, the portion of angels, [and closeness] with Christ.”¹⁷

20. How can Jesus Christ be truly present in what still appears to be bread and wine? In the liturgical act known as the epiclesis, the bishop or priest, speaking in the person of Jesus Christ, calls upon the Father to send down his Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ,

¹¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church*, nos. 18-22.

¹² Jn 6:54-56.

¹³ See St. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, LXVI.

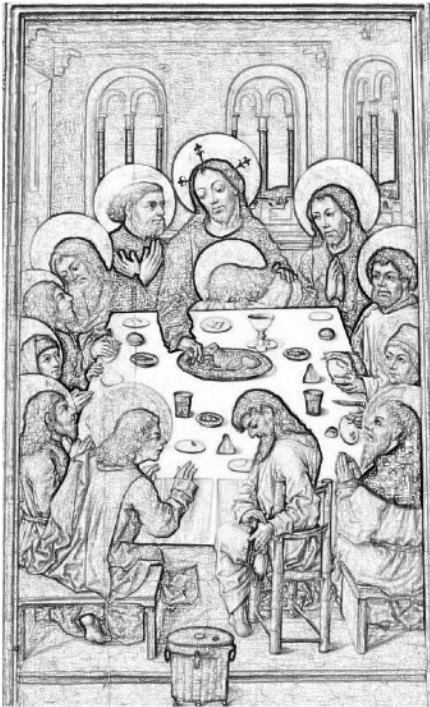
¹⁴ John 1:14.

¹⁵ Titus 2:14.

¹⁶ Phillipians 2:8

¹⁷ St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on First Corinthians*, 24.7, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First series (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 142.

and this change occurs through the institution narrative, by the power of the words of Christ pronounced by the celebrant.¹⁸



21. The reality that, in the Eucharist, bread and wine become the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ without ceasing to appear as bread and wine to our five senses is one of the central mysteries of the Catholic faith. This faith is a doorway through which we, like the saints and mystics before us, may enter into a deeper perception of the mercy and love manifested in and through Christ's sacramental presence in our midst. While one thing is seen with our bodily eyes, another reality is perceived through the eyes of faith. The real, true, and substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist is the most profound reality of the sacrament. "This mysterious change is very appropriately called by the Church transubstantiation."¹⁹ Though Christ is present to us in many ways in the liturgy, including in the assembly gathered, the presiding minister, and the word proclaimed, the Church also clearly affirms that "the mode of Christ's presence under the Eucharistic species is unique."²⁰ As St. Paul VI wrote "This presence is called real, not to exclude the idea that the others are 'real' too, but rather to indicate presence par excellence, because it is substantial and through it Christ becomes present whole and entire, God and man."²¹ In the sacramental representation of his sacrifice, Christ holds back nothing, offering himself, whole and entire. The use of the word "substantial" to mark the unique presence of Christ in the Eucharist is intended to convey the totality of the gift he offers to us.

22. When the Eucharist is distributed and the minister says, "the Body of Christ," we are to look not simply at what is visible before our eyes, but at what it has become by the words of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit – the Body of

¹⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1353.

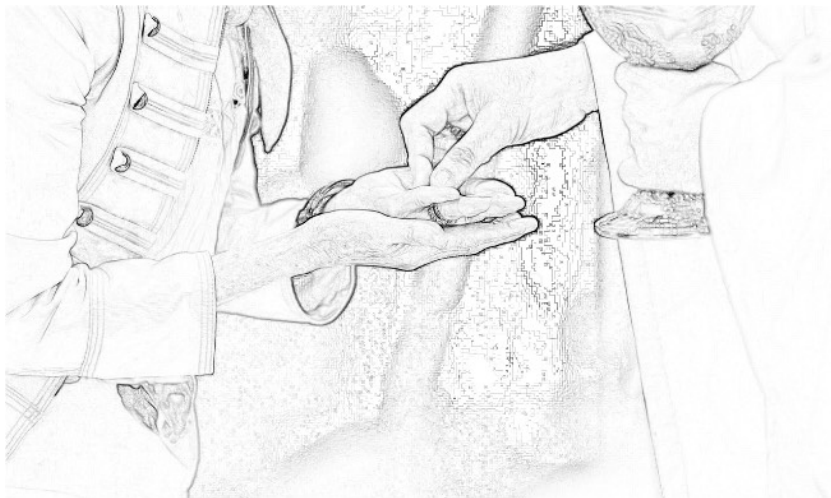
¹⁹ Pope Paul VI, *Credo of the People of God*, no. 25; cf. Council of Trent, Session 13, *Decree on the Sacrament of the Eucharist*, ch. 4.

²⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1374; see also *Sacramentum Concilium*, no. 7.

²¹ Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, no. 39.

Christ.²² The communicant's response of "Amen" is a profession of faith in the Real Presence of Christ and reflects the intimate personal encounter with him, with his gift of self, that comes through reception of Holy Communion.

23. The Church's firm belief in the Real Presence of Christ is reflected in the worship that we offer to the Blessed Sacrament in various ways, including Eucharistic Exposition, Adoration, and Benediction; Eucharistic Processions; and Forty Hours Devotions. In addition, the practices of reverently genuflecting before the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, bowing one's head prior to the reception of Holy Communion, and refrain from food and drink for at least one hour before receiving Communion are clear manifestations of the Church's Eucharistic faith.²³



²² See St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV.16.28.

²³ See *Code of Canon Law*, can. 919 §1. "A person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before holy communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine."

Homily Notes

THE SAINTS ON REAL PRESENCE

“Recognize in this bread what hung on the cross, and in this chalice what flowed from His side... whatever was in many and varied ways announced beforehand in the sacrifices of the Old Testament pertains to this one sacrifice which is revealed in the New Testament.”

St. Augustine

“O Lord, we cannot go to the pool of Siloe to which you sent the blind man. But we have the chalice of Your Precious Blood, filled with life and light. The purer we are, the more we receive.”

St. Ephraem

“When you have received Him, stir up your heart to do Him homage; speak to Him about your spiritual life, gazing upon Him in your soul where He is present for your happiness; welcome Him as warmly as possible, and behave outwardly in such a way that your actions may give proof to all of His Presence.”

St. Francis de Sales

I hunger for the bread of God, the flesh of Jesus Christ ...; I long to drink of his blood, the gift of unending love.

St. Ignatius of Antioch

“How many of you say: I should like to see His face, His garments, His shoes. You do see Him, you touch Him, you eat Him. He gives Himself to you, not only that you may see Him, but also to be your food and nourishment.”

St. John Chrysostom

“If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion.”

St. Maximilian Kolbe

“Christ is present in the Eucharist, in the sacrament of His death and resurrection. In and through the Eucharist, you





acknowledge the dwelling-place of the Living God in human history. For the Eucharist is the Sacrament of the Love which conquers death. It is the Sacrament of the Covenant, pure Gift of Love for the reconciliation of all humanity. It is the gift of the Real Presence of Jesus The Redeemer, in the bread which is His Body given up for us, in the wine which is His Blood poured out for all. Thanks to the Eucharist, constantly renewed among all peoples of the world, Christ continues to build His church: He brings us together in praise and thanksgiving for salvation, in the communion which only infinite love can forge. Our worldwide gathering now takes on its fullest meaning, through the celebration of the Mass. Dear young friends, may your presence here mean a true commitment in faith! For Christ is now answering your own question and the questions of all those who seek the Living God. He answers by offering an invitation: This is My Body, take It and eat. To the Father He entrusts His supreme desire: that all those whom He loves may be one in the same communion.”

Pope Saint John Paul II, World Youth Day, 1997

“For in this way our Lord is ever present among those who believe in him, according to what He said: "Behold, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.”²⁴

St. Francis of Assisi

“In each of our lives Jesus comes as the Bread of Life - to be eaten, to be consumed by us. This is how He loves us. Then Jesus comes in our human life as the hungry one, the other, hoping to be fed with the Bread of our life, our hearts by loving, and our hands by serving. In loving and serving, we prove that we have been created in the likeness of God, for God is Love and when we love we are like God. This is what Jesus meant when He said, "Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

“Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the Living Heart of each of our parishes.”

Pope Saint Paul VI

²⁴ Matthew 28: 20.

Homily Notes

NOTES ON THE CORPUS CHRISTI SEQUENCE

At the request of Pope Urban IV, Saint Thomas Aquinas composed this sequence for the newly established feast of Corpus Christi in 1264. One of the few sequences preserved in the *Roman Missal* from the Middle Ages, its central theme of the sequence is the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

The sequence for Corpus Christ is optional²⁵ and may be sung before the Gospel Acclamation/Alleluia.



There are twenty four stanzas of the sequence, divided into five thematic sections.

The first five stanzas praise the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. The sequence praises Christ our Savior, Shepherd and King and invites the faithful to join in this adoration. The sequence then invites the faithful to see “the living and life-giving bread” set before them on the altar, the same given by the incarnate Lord to his Twelve disciples at the Last Supper (*sacrae mensae coenae*). From every breast a song of praise arises.

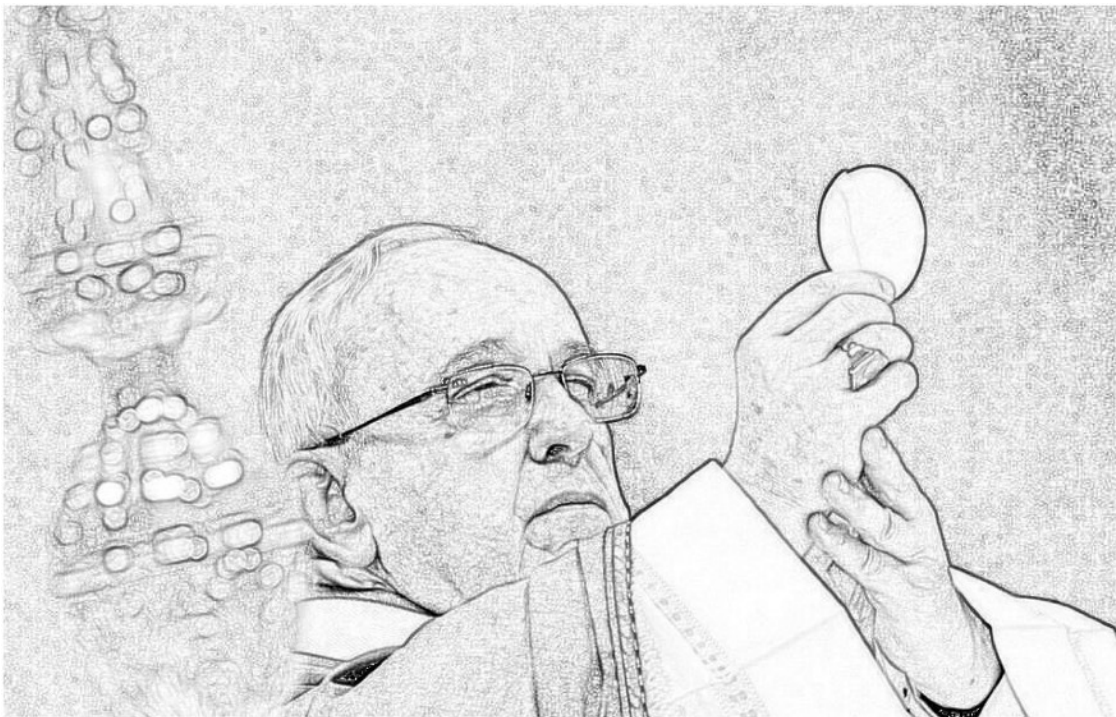
The next five stanzas establish the reason for the feast of Corpus Christi (stanzas 6-10)...as this solemn feast recalls the institution of this supper. For in this supper, our King’s Pasch brings to an end all previous rites as darkness is conquered by light. As Christ intended this rite to be repeated in memory of him so do we consecrate this bread and wine.

This is followed by a reflection for ten stanzas on Eucharistic doctrine (stanzas 11-20). For the Church teaches that the substance of this bread and wine are changed to flesh and Blood, a reality known only by faith, whereby two species are seen by human senses, while the reality of priceless things lies hidden. Flesh from bread and Blood from wine describes the mystery of Christ’s presence. For whoever

²⁵ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 64.

receives these species, receives Christ, whole and entire whether one or a thousand receive it. The sequence then addresses the question of unworthy reception of the Eucharist, noting that while both the wicked and good receive Communion the former receive to their condemnation, while the latter receive life. For in the broken bread, we receive the one Christ the same for evermore.

The final four stanzas of the Sequence is often referred to by the first line of this section: *Ecce panis Angelorum* (Behold the bread of angels). and consists for two parts: The first part addresses Eucharistic typology: the Eucharist as the Bread of Angels, pilgrim's food the fulfillment of the Lord's promise and the the Old Testament types, beginning with Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. The last part of this final section consists of the final two stanzas and prays that Jesus, the Good Shepherd will be our living bread here on earth in anticipation of that heavenly banquet in which we will see him face to face.

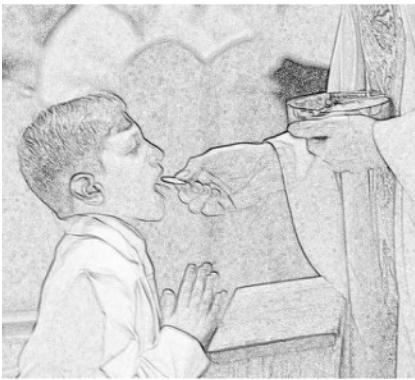


Homily Notes

A SIMPLE HOMILY FOR CORPUS CHRISTI

On the day I made my First Communion, Saturday, June 4, 1960 my Godparents, Nora and George, gave me this little prayer book. This book, which has probably survived the last sixty-one years better than I have, taught me a very important lesson.

On page 55, there's a picture of the Priest holding up the host, entitled "The Changing of the Bread." Here is what it says: "This is the holiest part of the Mass. The priest first changes the bread into the living body of Jesus. He uses the same words Jesus used."



I can still remember how excited I was to receive Jesus in Holy Communion and to know that he would be always with me, even when I felt afraid or little.

Our beloved Pope emeritus, Benedict XVI felt the same way when he made his First Communion on a Sunday in March of 1936. "I understood," he said, "that Jesus had entered my heart, he had actually visited me. And with Jesus, God himself was with me. And I realized that this is a gift of love that is truly worth more than all the other things that life can give"²⁶

That feeling never really goes away. As when I would take my bike home from High School. often overwhelmed with the angst of adolescence. Each day I would stop in front of Saint Brigid's Church and sit in front of the tabernacle. Somehow, just staring at that little red light and the tabernacle beside it was enough to reassure me that I was not alone and that God would make sense of it all.

And he has. Jesus has kept his promise that "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him."²⁷

²⁶ Pope Benedict XVI, 15 October, 2005.

²⁷ John 6: 56.

The Lord has promised it, as he promised that “whoever eats* my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.”²⁸

I find myself wondering, more frequently as I grow older, what that Last Communion will be like on the day I will die. The Church calls it viaticum, the food for the journey home to the Lord who has never left me, but comes to live in my heart in Holy Communion.

As a priest, I have been frequently overwhelmed by the faith of those who receive the consecrated host a short time before they die. You can see it in their eyes, the same eyes that as a little kid gazed upon Christ’s Body the first time. There’s a trust in those eyes, and a faith that God, who has been with them at every Mass throughout their lives, will not abandon them in their final moments.

Rather, you can imagine them seeing him face-to-face whom they have received so many times at every age of their lives. Then they will see clearly, the one whom they have believed is present, Body, Blood Soul and Divinity” in each Holy Communion.

This is why the celebration of the Mass is the source and summit of the Christian life, by which we take part in the holy and living sacrifice offered by Christ upon the altar of the Cross.

How blessed we are to be called to the Supper of the Lamb!



²⁸ John 6: 54.

Worship of the Eucharist

NINE QUESTIONS ON ADORATION²⁹

1. How does adoration of the exposed Blessed Sacrament differ from adoration of the Holy Eucharist reserved in the tabernacle?

Eucharistic adoration of the reserved Blessed Sacrament is a devotional act. Eucharistic exposition is a liturgical action, by which the Blessed Sacrament is displayed outside the tabernacle in a monstrance or ciborium for public veneration by the faithful. It is a public celebration that enables the faithful to perceive more clearly the relationship between the reserved Sacrament and the “sacrifice of the Mass [which] is truly the origin and the purpose of the worship that is shown to the Eucharist outside Mass.”³⁰



2. What are the liturgical rites for adoration of the exposed Blessed Sacrament?

These rites are found in the third chapter of the ritual book *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* [HCW], entitled Forms of Worship of the Holy Eucharist. The rites for adoration of the exposed Blessed Sacrament are found in numbers 82-100. These rites consist of Exposition, Adoration, Benediction, and Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

3. What are the rites of Exposition and Adoration?

While the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, and the ciborium or monstrance is placed upon the altar, it is fitting that a song be sung by those gathered. If the monstrance is used (rather than the ciborium) the minister incenses the sacrament.³¹ For the period of adoration “there should be prayers, songs, and readings to direct the attention of the faithful to the worship of Christ the Lord.”³² A homily or brief exhortation is also appropriate, as are extended periods of silence.

²⁹ USCCB Secretariat for the Liturgy, 2006. All rights reserved.

³⁰ *Eucharistic mysterium*, no. 3e.

³¹ Cf. HCW, no. 93.

³² HCW, no. 95.

4. What are the Rites of Benediction and Reposition?

For the rites of Benediction, described in HCW, no. 97, the Priest incenses the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance, prays one of the prescribed prayers,³³ and, with the humeral veil, silently makes the sign of the cross over the people.³⁴ As the Blessed Sacrament is then reposed in the tabernacle, the people may sing an acclamation.³⁵

5. When the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, how many candles should be used?

“For exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance, four to six candles are lighted and incense is used. For exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the ciborium, at least two candles should be lighted, and incense may be used.”³⁶

6. What vesture should be worn for the rites of Adoration of the exposed Blessed Sacrament?

“The minister, if he is a priest or deacon, should vest in an alb, or a surplice over a cassock, and a stole. Other ministers should wear either the liturgical vestments which are used in the region or the vesture which is suitable for this ministry and which has been approved by the Ordinary. The priest or deacon should wear a white cope and humeral veil to give the blessing at the end of adoration, when the exposition takes place with the monstrance; in the case of exposition in the ciborium, the humeral veil should be worn.”³⁷

7. May these rites be adapted or shortened for particular circumstances?

No. The liturgical rites may not be adapted or shortened beyond the scope envisioned by the rubrics of Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass. Simply opening the tabernacle to enhance private or

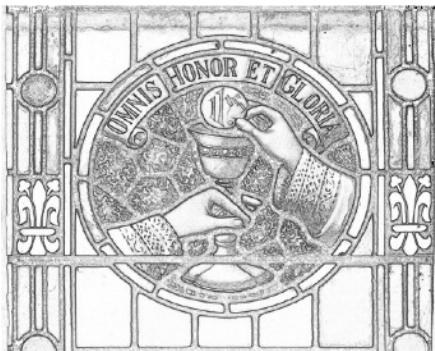
³³ cf. HCW, nos. 98, 224-229.

³⁴ cf. HCW, no. 99.

³⁵ cf. HCW, no. 100.

³⁶ HCW, no. 85.

³⁷ HCW, no. 92.



devotional prayer, is not in conformity with the liturgical requirements of HCW, nos. 93-95. It might be noted, however, that the Benediction is omitted when the exposition is led by a lay person.³⁸

8. Is it permissible to use an “Exposition Tabernacle,” which includes a small window with a sliding cover, for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament?

No. “The holy Eucharist is to be reserved in a solid tabernacle. It must be opaque and unbreakable.”³⁹

9. May Evening Prayer (Vespers) be celebrated in the presence of the exposed Blessed Sacrament?

Yes. “Part of the liturgy of the hours, especially the principal hours, may be celebrated before the Blessed Sacrament when there is a lengthy period of exposition. This liturgy extends the praise and thanksgiving offered to God in the Eucharistic celebration to the several hours of the day; it directs the prayers of the Church to Christ and through him to the Father in the name of the whole world.”⁴⁰



³⁸ cf. HCW, no. 91.

³⁹ HCW, no. 10; Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, 938 §3; *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 314.

⁴⁰ HCW, no. 96.

Worship of the Eucharist

THE STRUCTURE OF ADORATION⁴¹

Eucharistic Song

Exposition

If the exposition takes place at the end of Mass, the consecrated host is placed in the monstrance after the distribution of Holy Communion. Otherwise, the host is taken in procession from the tabernacle to the place of exposition.



Adoration

Even a shorter period of adoration should be accompanied by readings, periods of silent prayer, prayers, songs or even the Liturgy of the Hours.

Benediction

Eucharistic Song

Prayer

Blessing

Reposition

Acclamation

SAMPLE ORDER OF EXPOSITION AND BENEDICTION

EXPOSITION

When the presider (priest or deacon) goes to the tabernacle and when he opens it all kneel. Once the celebrant has reached the front of the altar and kneels, *O Saving Victim* is sung by all present, as he incenses the monstrance.

O saving Victim, open wide
The gate of heaven to us below.
Our foes press on from every side;
Your aid supply, your strength bestow.

⁴¹ Redacted from *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*.

To your great name be endless praise,
Immortal Godhead, One in Three;
O grant us endless length of days
In our true native land with thee. Amen.

ADORATION

During this period there may be appropriate prayers, songs, readings from scripture, and a brief homily to help the congregation focus its attention to the worship of the Lord.

BENEDICTION

The celebrant goes to the altar and kneels. All kneel and join in singing the *Tantum Ergo* while he incenses the monstrance.



Down in adoration falling,
This great Sacrament we hail;
Over ancient forms of worship
Newer rites of grace prevail;
Faith will tell us Christ is present,
When our human senses fail.

To the everlasting Father,
And the Son who made us free,
And the Spirit, God proceeding
From them Each eternally,
Be salvation, honor, blessing,
Might and endless majesty. Amen.

All remain kneeling while the priest or deacon stands and says:
You have given them Bread from heaven.

ALL: Having all sweetness within it.

Priest/Deacon: Let us pray.

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.

ALL: Amen.

BENEDICTION

The priest or deacon then blesses all present with the Eucharist.

REPOSITION

The priest or deacon reposes the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.

ACCLAMATION

The priest or deacon returns to the Altar, where he leads the Divine Praises.

Blessed be God.
Blessed be his holy name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.
Blessed be the name of Jesus.
Blessed be his most Sacred Heart.
Blessed be his most Precious Blood.
Blessed be Jesus in the most holy sacrament of the altar.
Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.
Blessed be the great Mother of God,
Mary most holy.
Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.
Blessed be her glorious Assumption.
Blessed be the name of Mary, virgin and Mother.
Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse.
Blessed be God in his angels and in his saints.

As the priest or deacon leaves, a suitable song may be sung.

Holy God, we praise thy name;
Lord of all, we bow before thee;
All on earth they scepter claim;
All in heaven above adore thee.
Infinite thy vast domain,
Everlasting is thy reign!

Hark, the loud celestial hymn;
Angel choirs above are raising;
Cherubim and Seraphim,
In unceasing chorus praising,
Fill the heavens with sweet accord:
"Holy, holy, holy, Lord!"

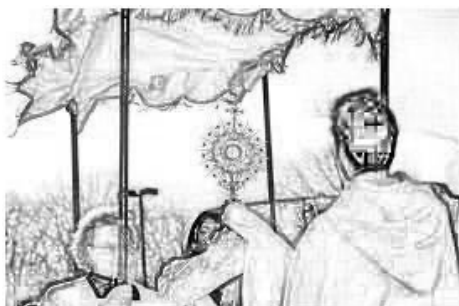
Worship of the Eucharist

EUCCHARISTIC PROCESSIONS

Eucharistic processions provide a public witness to the Church's devotion to Christ's present in the Blessed Sacrament and the Church's presence in the world. They are particularly appropriate to open this period of Eucharistic revival. The following excerpts are taken from Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass.

101. When the eucharist is carried through the streets in a solemn procession with singing, the Christian people give public witness of faith and devotion towards the sacrament.⁴²

It is for the local Ordinary, however, to judge whether this is opportune in today's circumstances, and to determine the time, place, and order of such processions, so that they may be conducted with dignity and without loss of reverence to the sacrament.



102. The annual procession on the feast of Corpus Christi, or on an appropriate day near this feast, has a special importance and meaning for the pastoral life of the parish or city. It is therefore desirable to continue this procession, in accordance with the law, when today's circumstances permit and when it can truly be a sign of common faith and adoration.

In the principal districts of large cities there may be additional eucharistic processions for pastoral reasons at the discretion of the local Ordinary. If the procession cannot be held on the feast of Corpus Christi, it is fitting to hold some kind of public celebration for the entire city or its principal districts in the cathedral church or other appropriate places.

103. It is fitting that a eucharistic procession begin after the Mass in which the host to be carried in the procession has

⁴² Cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 59: AAS 59 (1967) 570.

been consecrated. A procession may also take place, however, at the end of a lengthy period of public adoration.

104. Eucharistic processions should be arranged in accordance with local customs concerning the decoration of the streets and the order followed by the participants. In the course of the procession there may be stations where the eucharistic blessing is given, if this custom is in effect and is of pastoral advantage. Songs and prayers should be so directed that all proclaim their faith in Christ and direct their attention to the Lord alone.

105. The priest who carries the blessed sacrament may wear the vestments used for the celebration of Mass if the procession takes place immediately afterward, or he may vest in a white cope.

106. Lights, incense, and the canopy under which the priest carrying the blessed sacrament should be used in accordance with local customs.

107. It is fitting that the procession should go from one church to another. Nevertheless, if local circumstances require, the procession may return to the same church where it began.

108. At the end of the procession benediction with the blessed sacrament should be given in the church where the procession ends or at another appropriate place. Then the blessed sacrament is reposed.



Prayer for the End of the Pandemic

O God,
whose Only-Begotten Son bore the weight
of human suffering for our salvation,
hear the prayers of your Church
for our sick brothers and sisters
and deliver us from this time of trial.



Open our ears and our hearts
to the voice of your Son:
Be not afraid, for I am with you always.

Bless all doctors and nurses,
researchers and public servants;
give us the wisdom to do what is right
and the faith to endure this hour,
that, trusting in your loving protection
we might see the end of this pandemic
and rejoice in your mercy.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.