

The Body and Blood of Christ, Cycle C

Today, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ which emphasizes Christ' sacrifice for the salvation of the world and his real presence in the Eucharist.

The sacrifice of the Mass is a symbol of God's love for us – The Father will allow the Son to die, and the Son willing gave up his life, for their love of us. The Eucharist is also a symbol of community or fellowship. The word companion is derived from two Latin words: “com” and “panis” which mean “with bread”. Companions are those who share bread, who share a meal. There is a symbol of unity that is partially lost. Initially it was a single loaf of bread that was shared. For practical purposes, especially the lack of crumbs and the ease of distribution, every one receives an individual piece.

Communion as the word suggests, is union with God. What ritual in our culture do we associate with the making of two people into one? Marriage. The sacred host is not a spiritual vitamin cookie; it is Christ himself who offers himself to us. At communion he gives himself to us as we give ourselves to him, just as a husband and wife give themselves to each other to make their union holy: to become one and to mirror the live of the Trinity: the Father and the Son, bound as one through the Spirit of Love, the Holy Spirit.

Marriage has to be between two people, therefore the host cannot be an inanimate object but the presence of Christ.

In our culture the physical union by itself does not create the oneness of a marriage. It is also the preparation that goes into the relationship prior to the union and the sacrificial love for each other that create the oneness. Therefore, Communion,

our union with God, presupposes a love-relationship with God. Are we prepared to enter a union with God like a marriage? Fidelity to God means that our relationship with God must have priority over all other relationships and attachments. If we spend time with someone but our minds are elsewhere, we are not truly present to that person. Most times the other person is aware of our emotional absence. God knows everything. Does your mind wander during the Mass?

Saint Paul tells us that the tradition of the Mass was handed down to him. The bread is the Body of Christ and the cup contains his blood. When Jesus told his disciples “unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have life within you”, many quit as his disciples/followers. He never called them back saying he was speaking symbolically. We have to accept the presence of Christ in the Eucharist as an act of faith. However, God has helped those who struggled with this concept with Eucharistic miracles. “Google” Eucharistic miracles, and you will be surprised how many will pop up. My favorites are the miracles of Lanciano, Italy and Buenos Aires, Argentina, in the eight century and twenty century respectively. Both hosts had been determined to have transformed into the tissue of a heart and DNA determined that it was the same person. The difference in the age of the sacred hosts is twelve hundred years

We are on our journey to holiness and we cannot do it by ourselves. We need to recognize our dependence on God’s help to complete our conversion, we need to recognize our dependence on the Eucharist. Without God our spiritual life will wither and die.