

Homilies from last Sunday

Homily for the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ – Year A

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



Fr Michael says:

“Receive who you are!”

Today we rejoice in who we are, as St Augustine reminds us, when he gave Communion to God’s people in North Africa! Our Reading from Deuteronomy reminds of the fact that as God’s People we need to nourish ourselves with His Word. This sharing draws us all into one, as Paul tells the Christians of Corinth. Our Gospel stresses the reality of who it is that we receive when we eat the bread and drink the wine of the Eucharist, as pledges for the fullness of eternal life.

Cardinal Hume visited Ethiopia when it was undergoing a severe famine in the 80s. He was taken to visit a settlement, where people were expecting food, even though it was not likely to be coming! As he arrived, a small boy came up to him and took his hand and stayed with him during the whole of the visit. As he went round with the cardinal he kept making two gestures: he pointed to his mouth with one hand and with the other he took the cardinal’s hand and rubbed it on his cheek.

After the visit, the Cardinal said: “Here was an orphan, who was lost and starving. Yet by his two simple gestures, he indicated our two fundamental needs or hungers. With one gesture he showed me his hunger for food and with the other his hunger for love. I have never forgotten that incident, and to this day, I wonder if that child is still alive. I remember that as I boarded the helicopter he stood and looked at me reproachfully.”

Today, we reflect on the words of Jesus, during His time of temptation: “A man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” We need bread as our staple diet, but we need more than that, we may be fed physically, but we have greater needs than that – our spiritual side that too must be nourished – as even that small boy realised. This is why the Eucharist is essential to us in our journey of faith and life: both are shared with us equally! It is not just a memory that we celebrate, it is that reality made present to us HERE and NOW!

“Blessed are the hungry; they shall get their fill.” It is in our emptiness that we are filled. It is in our confusions that we are guided. It is in our weakness that we are strengthened. It is in our sins that we are forgiven. It is in our hunger that we are fed. We believe that God has a homeland prepared for us, where all our hungers will be satisfied and all our hopes fulfilled. This conviction makes it possible for us to travel onwards with an ache in our hearts and unquenchable longing in our souls.