

Homily Body and Blood of Christ – Corpus Christi - Year C 2022

Despite all the studies and reflections about the Eucharist, the Pandemic brought home to me not only the immense value of the eucharist but the full importance it is to faith. When I walked into the church to celebrate mass during the first lockdown and came into an empty church, I almost gagged. It was all wrong! Where are the people? How can I celebrate such an essential part of faith without the presence of others – of you? One saving grace was that the mass was being streamed and the green lines appearing across the screen told me that you were present, if not in person, then in spirit.

Ronald Rolheiser speaks about the soul as both a principle of energy and a principle of integration. Life is God given. Without the presence of God, we would not exist. Our energy and verve for life is God given and lies at the heart of all that we do for others, for ourselves and for our planet. Hopefully, this energy is used mostly for good but it can also be negative. We get lost, fail, let ourselves, others and God down by sinning.

As a principle of integration, the soul is the glue that holds us together, expressed in relationships, in belonging, supporting and caring for others; the recognition that we are stronger and more-healthy together than we are alone; friendship and family both demand presence together - a lesson learned from the pandemic forcing us into undesired isolation.

The feeding of the five thousand today speaks to all these elements. Jesus is present and gives himself to the people in the bread that he shares with them. The eucharist is the truest expression of Jesus wanting to be fully present within us through eating and drinking him. It clearly shows us that Jesus not only sustains us but brings us together as a family and why our being present is so important.

Some believe that when Jesus began sharing the loaves and fishes those with food did the same. The eucharist is the source of our energy. It encourages the desire to share our lives in imitation of Jesus. The eucharist is also the glue that holds us together and calls us back time and again to share in and be fully part of this meal; this celebration of love and goodness.

Celebrating a meal without the presence of people interacting can never be the same as when people are present. We call ourselves family, since we are brothers and sisters, and Jesus gives himself to us through each other in such a beautiful way as we radiate the presence of God to each other. In the eucharist, God glues us together with LOVE.

Having just passed his driving test, a son asked his father, an evangelist, if he could now use the car. His father said, "I'll make a deal with you, son. Raise your grades from a C to a B average, study your Bible, and get your hair cut and then we'll talk about the car."

The son agreed.

Six weeks later, the son came back and asked his father about the car.

His father said, "Son, I am, very proud of you. You've raised your grades, and you've been studying your Bible and participating much more in the Bible study class. But I'm very disappointed that you haven't had a haircut."

The young man replied, "You know dad, I've been thinking about that and I've noticed that in the Bible Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, and there's strong argument that Jesus himself had long hair."

To which his father replied, "You're right, son but did you also notice that **They all WALKED everywhere they went?**"