

## Homily Corpus Christi Sunday Year A 2023

We use touch not just to make physical contact but human contact – a meeting of spirits - a meeting of souls. The Father realised this in sending Jesus to us. Jesus was touchable, real. In his presence, God's love was made tangible. Jesus continues to make his presence tangible in the laying on of hands, through holy anointing and through the waters of baptism; it is the reason why Jesus gave us the Eucharist. The Eucharist isn't abstract or a theological instruction; it isn't a creed or a moral precept; it isn't a philosophy or even an intimate word. It is a bodily embrace, a kiss, something physical. What better way to experience the real presence!

Christianity is an earthy religion. It doesn't call us out of the physical, out of the body or out of the world. In fact, Christ entered the world in human form and became one with it. He not only blessed it but redeemed it. He calls us to celebrate life as a gift.

The Gospel reminds us that Jesus' contemporaries were scandalized by him talking about eating flesh and drinking blood. They said *"This is intolerable language!"* when Jesus spoke of the physical character of the Eucharist in John's gospel. It can still be hard for us to accept today. Yet this is also a wonderful aspect of Christianity. In the Eucharist, we are touched by Jesus himself.

And, given all the tensions, difficulties and challenges we face in life, we need that touch of Jesus, frequently, even daily. Macrina Wiederkehr writes this about the Last Supper:

*"Supper was special that night. There was both a heaviness and a holiness hanging in the air. The mood was sacred, yet sorrowful. Gathered around the table eating that solemn, holy meal seemed to us the most important meal we had ever sat down to eat. We were dwelling in the heart of mystery. Though dark the night, hope felt right as though something evil was about to be conquered. And then suddenly the One we loved startled us. He got up from the table and put on an apron. Can you imagine how we felt? God in an apron! Tenderness encircled us as He bowed before us. He knelt and said, "I choose to wash your feet because I love you." God in an apron, kneeling. I couldn't believe my eyes. I was embarrassed until his eyes met mine. I sensed my value then. He touched my feet. He held them in his strong, brown hands. He washed them. I can still feel the water. I can still feel the touch of his hands. I can still see the look in his eyes. Then he handed me a towel and said, "As I have done, so must you do." Learn how to bow. Learn how to kneel. Let your tenderness encircle everyone you meet. Wash their feet not because you have to, because you want to. It seems I've stood two thousand years holding the towel in my hands, "As I have done so must you do," keeps echoing in my heart. "There are so many feet to wash," I keep saying. "No," I hear God's voice resounding through the years. "There are only my feet. What you do for them you do for me."* (Macrina Wiederkehr, *Seasons of your Heart*.)

Skin heals when touched which is why Jesus gave us the Eucharist!!

### **An old couple goes out for lunch.**

They order one burger, one small fry, and one drink. The man gets an extra cup and pours half of the drink into the other cup, gets a plastic knife and cuts the burger in half, and dumps out the fries and divides them. I noticed and asked if they needed a few bucks to buy another meal. The old man said, *"No sir, we share everything. Split it all right down the middle. Always have since the day we were married."* I said *"Fair enough, it seems to be working out for you."* Then I noticed that the lady was almost finished eating and the man hadn't even touched his food. I told him *"You might want to dig in before it gets cold."* He smiled and said *"I will in a moment, it's my wife's turn with the dentures."*