

*Living the Spirit  
Corpus Christi*

This week the Church celebrates the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, the Eucharist. In any attempt to grow spiritually in our Catholic faith and life, the Eucharist has to be the center of our concern. We must understand that in His own way this Sacrament is a special presence of the real Jesus with his faithful people.

I do not forget that one of my purposes for these inserts has been to share the thoughts of one priest with the reader. Perhaps it is a vain wish, but I've hoped that at least some of the problems facing the Church would dissipate if the faithful had a better understanding of the gift that the Eucharist actually is. I am sure that we try hard to love the Church. Yet, we have to learn every day that without the presence of Christ there would be no Church. Indeed, we can say that the Church is Christ living on in the world.

Let me share some personal thoughts about my relationship with the Eucharist. From the start I was drawn to the awe that surrounds this Sacrament. Like many older persons my First Communion was a family occasion. Given the rigid fast requirements of that time, I am sure that my Mother was on the watch, lest I get up in the night and drink some water. I heard later in life how some parents would tie up the spigots to prevent what would have been seen as a disaster. Surrounded with various private ceremonies, I knew that this was to be a great occasion.

I was to have many more such days and times. I think of my First Solemn Mass, for example. Some times, however, reception of this Sacrament becomes a routine affair. Still, we should know that we receive Jesus as He is and as we are. It is not just that we want this presence; it is that He wants it. Even great Saints have wondered how Jesus could be so insistent on being within them. The answer, of course, is love. To each of us Jesus says: *I have loved you with an everlasting love.* Let Jesus say this to you!

There were early lessons. The Sisters in school taught us to be reverent. They did not allow us to be sloppy in the presence of the Lord. We came to Mass in our Sunday best. Sitting up straight and kneeling the same way was the rule. Mass was not a time for folly. It was a serious time, a time that was to be used for prayer. [It still is.]

Prayer is a conversation with God. It is not like any other. Most of us know our part. We adore, confess our sorrow for our failings and thank God for gifts received. Then the supplication and asking of God is never forgotten. Sometimes the Eucharistic experience is one-sided. We forget to listen. Often our Communion is just the start of what God wants to tell us. He will find the way to help us listen, but we really must listen!

I do not know how you recall past Communions you have made. Do you realize that none of them can be without value for your spiritual growth and maturity? Maybe you will not experience emotions, or blinding insights of knowledge, or great strength of will. But Jesus will be at work within you, filling the recesses of your heart. All this unless you cast Him off! As you receive Communion, tell Jesus how much you want to love Him. Ask His grace, the very grace you most need. Salute him as Lord and God. Let Him absolve those small sins that sully your soul's purity. Join in the Church's prayer to bring Mercy from His Sacred Heart upon those most in need of that gift.

*God love you always!*

*Monsignor David Morrison*

***O Sacrament most holy, O sacrament divine,  
All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine!***

### **Just Notes**

Eucharistic Miracles are not unknown in the history of the Church. I recall one that revived a priest's faith when he began to doubt the Real Presence. Miracles are a gift to us from God. While there are only some that become a reason for public devotion, I am sure that Jesus has worked many a spiritual "miracles" for those who receive Him with great devotion and need His assistance. Whatever, all such miracles should lead us to a deeper faith, to Christ in the Eucharist, so that with Christ we can bring Him to our very own world.

### **Insights**

There are many avenues to insights and meditations that bring us a deeper appreciation of the Eucharist. There is so much material available for our study as we go through our journey from God to God. I recall having studied in Sacramental Theology many of the teachings on the Eucharist that are defined by the Church. I also recall how many speculations we reviewed that were made throughout the ages.

There is a crucial need for Catholics to overcome the many forces of secularism and relativism that may lead us to doubt the simple fact that Jesus is really and truly present in the Eucharist. When we believe we find more than faith's certainty; we find Jesus as present to us, and He becomes our hope. I recall a book that was entitled "This Tremendous Lover". It was centered on the meaning of the Eucharist. Its author wrote of Jesus a true Friend. We should realize that Jesus really does love us.

### **A Reminder**

Receiving Jesus in the Eucharist is available to us every day. In our parish we have a faithful few who come to Mass daily. Of course, we recognize that many simply cannot do this, given their work and other duties. Some, too, are unable because of their disability. For many it is good to make what is called a spiritual Communion. This involves just asking Jesus in your own words to come to you. How could He fail to do so? He loves to be needed.

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I would like to take this opportunity to make public my wishes to Father Arnout and my thanks to him for his priestly company to me and his evident zeal for the ministry of the Church. I mentioned to him that such changes in our life as priests come from the "*Promitto*", the promise we made at our Ordination. Sometimes I think of how easy it was to say, but how challenging to live the obedience it involves. That is why we need to pray for all our priests who are being changed to new works of ministry in our diocese. Let us entrust all our priests to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in this month of the Sacred Heart.

It has been some time since I wrote a personal kind of letter in an insert. Let me have the luxury of doing that now.

My recent little reminder of mortality that led me to the hospital proved to be a kind of false alarm. It has been a worthy kind of message that there are many more serious things to worry about than everyday annoyances. I tend to plan well ahead of time. At least I did, until human weakness affected an otherwise calm life. I share this because I know that many have experienced a similar message given to them in varied ways. Any illness, even momentary, can be a reminder that we do not have here a lasting city.

It is not a morbid message for believers. If we don't have such a lasting place here, then we may well conclude that we have one elsewhere. That time will give way to eternity. That suffering will be our key to entrance into joys beyond all telling. Do you share this belief with me? I hope so. That is why we do not allow ourselves to live for today's plans, for tomorrow, or in the past. We must live for the present moment, and make of it what is NOW.

Speaking with a dear friend, Bishop Mengeling, who has just undergone a serious surgery, and faces weeks of rehab, I was pleased to hear him say how suffering is our prayer when we cannot form the words and have our thoughts clouded or impeded. I find myself thanking God for a friend who speaks of God and the things of God. Not as a duty. And with simple ease. Christ shares his friendship through others.

How wonderful that Christ uses so many others to bring us consolation. I cannot praise my doctors and nurses enough. I think here of the service given by Beth, our Parish Nurse. I think of all those who prayed for me. I am always in debt to them. It reinforces my desire to declare how lucky this parish (my parish) is to have Monsignor Sacks and Father Cletus and so many others. To all I give my public thanks for all they do. I hope that you have similar thoughts when a day is not so very good.

It is often found that sick people exaggerate a little, to use St. Bernadette's words. In the past when my Class from the Seminary got together, we talked about our bishop, our pastors or our curates, or our projects and plans etc. Now we talk about our health. One of my classmates has had a stroke, but is now recovering. Another has cancer and undergoes chemotherapy. What is striking is that such circumstances are bringing them peace, as one mentioned to me.

How is this? I believe that the answer is found in Jesus. We can see that the hands of the doctors are His. The nurses' smile, even when they poke you trying to find a vein, is His. He inspires countless prayers, and makes them His own. The Eucharist comes alive to us in the deeds of His faithful people who are placed in our lives.

Even a brief stay in a hospital or a moment of illness has so many lessons to teach us. One I have learned again and again is that all in all, it is not so bad to be a Catholic. And a Catholic priest at that! At least that is what I have found. That is why I give thanks to God, and to you!

*O Sacrament, Most holy, O Sacrament Divine, All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine!*