

**Homily for the Solemnity of the
Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ**

June 3, 2018

**Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Springfield, Illinois**

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Reverend Fathers, Deacons, consecrated religious, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it is good for us to be here as we gather to celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, or as it is known by its traditional title in Latin, *Corpus Christi*.

Today, as we focus our attention on the source and summit of our faith, the reality of the Eucharist, the Blessed Sacrament, it is worthwhile to pause and reflect on the great gift that our Lord gave us at that Last Supper, which we just heard recounted in today's Gospel of Saint Mark, in these words:

While they were eating, He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." Then He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many."¹

The great gift that our Lord gave His disciples at the Last Supper is the same gift that He still continues to give us today: His Most Holy Body and Blood in the Eucharist. Since our Lord gives us this most precious gift of His Body and Blood, we must ask ourselves whether we take the time to appreciate what we have been given or whether we simply take it for granted.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament is something that we cannot take for granted. Rather, we must consider what we are receiving. Today, of all days, we need to stop and look, and then, listen -- really listen - to the words spoken to you before you receive Holy Communion: the Body of Christ. Let that sink in for a moment: this is the Body of Christ.

Then consider what you hold in your hand or receive on your tongue. Feel the weight of it. The host, that appears to be just a small sliver of bread, is almost weightless, yet, at the same time, it is not. In reality, this is the Body of Christ. You hold in your hands the One who walked on water. You cradle the One who calmed the storm. Here is the Son of God. Here is the One who gave sight to the blind, raised the dead, and fed the hungry.

If you had lived in Galilee or Jerusalem in the time of Jesus, you would have had the greatest difficulty in getting anywhere near Him, with the curious crowds and the scores of sick people that clamored for His attention. If you did get the chance to speak to Him, most likely after thirty seconds someone else would have elbowed you out of the way. But here, in the Eucharist, our Lord comes to meet you. Jesus is waiting for you in this great sacrament of love.

Today, as we take part in the procession at the end of Mass, we will accompany our Lord as He makes His way through the streets of our city; we will be like the disciples who joyfully followed the Master during the days of His life on earth. We, too, will experience the joy of being with Him. As we see Him pass through the streets visible in the monstrance, we bear witness to the joy and the love of Christ to all of those whom we encounter.

My dear brother and sisters in Christ, as the procession draws to a close and we go our separate ways, may we remember that our bearing witness to Christ through living as His disciples cannot be confined to this one day of the year or even one day of the week. Rather, it must be lived each and every day of our lives.

To this very point, St. Josemaría Escrivá, in his book, *Christ is Passing By*, wrote:

The Corpus Christi procession makes Christ present in towns and cities throughout the world. But His presence cannot be limited to only one day, like a sound you hear and then forget. It should remind us that we have to discover our Lord in our ordinary everyday activities. Side by side with this solemn procession there is the simple silent procession of the ordinary life of each Christian. ... Let us ask our Lord, then, to make us souls devoted to the Blessed Eucharist, so that our relationship with Him brings forth joy and serenity and a desire for justice. In this way we will make it easier for others to recognize Christ; we will put Christ at the center of all human activities.²

So, today, as we join together in observing this beautiful tradition of the Church through which we bear witness to our faith and love of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, may we also be mindful of always bearing witness to our love of Christ in our daily lives by living as true disciples of our Risen Lord.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

¹ Mark 14:22-24

² Saint Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ is Passing By*, p. 156.