

SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 2009

"The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ"



Today we celebrate the feast of the most holy body and blood of Christ. Like last week's feast of the Trinity, today's is also a mystery. It is an invisible reality bigger than us. It is a core belief of our faith.

Ever see a mother or father delighting in their infant... being playful, affectionate and tender... and saying: "My little pumpkin... you are so sweet I could eat you"? In today's feast, we profess our belief that when we come to the Table of the Lord, we do exactly that with Christ. We receive into our own bodies, the Body and Blood of Christ. That's why we respond with "Amen!" when the Eucharistic Minister says: "The Body of Christ"... "The Blood of Christ".

All of us know that blood is essential for our lives. Without blood, we die. Those among us whom have received blood transfusions were in a serious condition... a condition of life and death... that necessitated more blood if they were to live. During a blood transfusion, we are receiving the life substance of another into our very selves. In effect, we are receiving the gift of life from another. In Communion, we are receiving the life substance of our soul, the body and Blood of Christ.

Something that is oftentimes not well known regarding our faith is what is called the Sacrament of the Dying. Many may think it is the Anointing of the Sick. It is not. The Anointing of the Sick is to be celebrated under a variety of circumstances. Someone who is approaching death in the best circumstances has already celebrated the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Once that has been celebrated, the Eucharist is the Sacrament of the Dying. It is called "Food for the Journey." Isn't that beautiful? The Eucharist, the body, and blood of Christ, is the food we eat to prepare us to meet God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as we leave this life and enter into eternal life. Once we have died, we no longer need the Eucharist. We are with God in eternity. This side of death, we need the Body and Blood of Christ to nourish, nurture, heal and sustain us in our daily living.

As we celebrate this solemn feast today, we give thanks to God for the gift of the Eucharist... the Body and Blood of Christ. We thank God for the spiritual transfusion we regularly receive at Communion. We thank God for making a home in each of us and abiding in us through the Eucharist.

My sisters and brother, as we grow in faith may we highly value and treasure the presence of the Divine who comes to us in such an ordinary way.. that of eating at the Table of the Lord. We are humbled and over-whelmed at such a gift... the gift of everlasting life.

*"The Institution of the Eucharist" by Nicolas Poussin, c. 1640.
(Currently held at the Musée Du Louvre, Paris, France)*

