

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

This weekend we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. At the Last Supper, Jesus tells His disciples, “This is my Body... this is my Blood.” The boldness of this shocking statement would have needed clarification if Jesus was speaking metaphorically or in parables. After His long commentary on the Bread of Life (John 6:22-71), it is clear that Jesus is speaking of reality – true, a heavenly reality – not in symbols. This reality, though, is NOT cannibalism, for when we receive the Eucharist, we are receiving the glorified Body of Jesus (which includes the whole of the suffering, passion and death of Jesus, as well as His resurrection and ascension into heaven) – we truly receive His **Body, Blood, and Soul** (all of His humanity), and also His full **Divinity** when we go to Communion.

When you think about it, it’s kind of odd that God would do this for us – give us His Body to eat. By the Eucharist, He shows us that **He longs to be close to us**. He wants to be closer to us than marrow is to the bone. He also shows us that we were made for God, and **nothing short of God will satisfy us!** Each of us has felt emptiness, desperation and loneliness from time to time. This is a sign that no matter how many friends we have, no matter how much money or things we fill ourselves with, no matter how much of the world we have grasped, we still will feel restless until we rest in God. He alone will satisfy; He alone can give us peace.

I can hear you thinking: “Father, this all sounds good – great even – but let’s be honest, we don’t feel this when we go to Communion. More often, it is just something we do and forget about soon after.” Yes, for many, this is the case. I think a lot of things contribute to this. The first is that the grace of God works *deeper than feeling*. This means that most of the time *we won’t feel anything* when we go to Communion. Yes, there are times when God’s grace works in such a way that the emotions bubble up, but the actual working of grace in our lives goes far deeper than our emotions. This means that feelings are NOT a good barometer for recognizing God’s work in our lives.

Second, we often do not understand the mystery we celebrate in Mass and Communion. When we don’t understand the mystery, when we don’t *expect* to receive the fullness of God into us, we put up a blockade to the power of grace in our lives.

Another big thing that contributes to our lack of experience of Communion is that frequently we do not prepare ourselves well to receive Almighty God in the Eucharist. So how do we prepare ourselves? First and foremost is that we need to do a **good examination of conscience** and **repent** of our sins. Sin stands between us and God. If we refuse to let go of our sin, we cannot open our arms to be held by the God of the universe. This means we need to look honestly at ourselves. Where are the areas we have rebelled against God’s laws (thinking we know better than Him)? Where are the areas where we have held unforgiveness, resentment and bitterness against our neighbor? Where are the areas of addiction and habit from which we have not wanted to break free? We turn them over to God, and repent (turn away) from our sin. For more serious sins, we will have to get to Confession in order to receive the merciful and healing touch of God in a seriously more powerful way! The second part of preparing ourselves to receive Communion (after repenting of our sins), is to spend time in prayer, asking the God of the universe to cultivate our souls, that they may be a worthy resting place for Him – that we may become living tabernacles of His presence. Sometimes we sing at Mass, “Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.” We need to spend time asking Him to make us a worthy place for Him to reside.

It is hard work, preparing to receive our Lord. That is why I have established Adoration in the parish. By spending time in the Lord’s Eucharistic Presence, we are transformed, we are changed. Our minds come to a greater understanding of the mystery of the Eucharist as we train our eyes to pierce through the appearance of bread, to see the Presence of Christ. By spending time with Him, He gently convicts us of our sins and calls us to His merciful Heart. As we “Son-bathe” in His Presence, our bodies and souls are made into worthy sanctuaries, that we may be pure tabernacles of God.

I invite you to stop in to our Adoration time on Wednesdays: 8:30-9:30am, 2:00-8:00pm in the Church, or to visit Jesus in the Tabernacle – the Eucharist Chapel is open 24/7. Jesus is longing for you and wants to fulfill your longing!