

**FATHER MARK SCHULTE HOMILY**  
**Corpus Christi (B)**  
**June 6, 2021**  
**“His Blood in Your Blood”**

---

Last Sunday we spoke about the Trinity, Our God as three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We said that the Trinity represented the central mystery of the Christian faith. Close to the Trinity in its degree of mystery is the feast which we celebrate today, the Feast of Corpus Christi. It is the feast of the Eucharist, the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ in the consecrated bread and wine.

This feast of Corpus Christi is closely associated with Holy Thursday, which is celebrated just a few days before Easter Sunday. On that day at the traditional Passover meal, Jesus gave His church the Eucharist and the sacred priesthood. Corpus Christi celebrates the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist itself. The Eucharist rates its own feast day because the Eucharist has priority among all the seven sacraments. The Eucharist is Jesus, not simply the power of Jesus working in it as in the case with the other sacraments.

The Church has given us today a number of scripture passages to reflect upon as we contemplate this great feast of Corpus Christi which means “Body of Christ”. In each of these passages is a reference to blood (Ex 24:3-8) (Heb 9:11-15) (Mk 14:12-26).

In the first reading, we see that Moses had several young men slaughter a number of animals. The blood of the animals was put in bowls. The blood was then sprinkled on the people and on the altar that he made at the foot of the mountain. The animals were offered to God as a “peace” offering. The blood sealed the covenant (contract) between God and the people.

Why this use of blood? The ancient Israelites regarded blood as sacred. The blood contained the “life” principle of all living beings. Since all life comes from God and belongs to Him, blood is something sacred, over which He has exclusive rights. Blood, especially human blood, has other sacred meanings to the people of God as well (Lv 17:11).

Blood will play a significant role in the original Passover meal. The blood of an unblemished lamb, an animal, will be placed on the doorposts of the Israelite homes as a sign that its occupants belong to God. These homes will be “passed over” by the coming divine chastisement and no one inside will be harmed. We see that the blood had certain protective and redeeming qualities as a sign of life (Lv 17:11-12) (Ex 12:7-13).

In the Gospel of John, Jesus will tell his disciples: “unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you”. At the time, His words caused division among his followers, as they do even to this day, because the people did not understand them. The Israelites were not permitted by Mosaic law to consume the blood of animals let alone the blood of a human being. When they heard Jesus say this many walked away from Him, but His Apostles remained (Jn 6:66) (Lv 17:10).

Later on at the final Passover Supper before Jesus’ death, Jesus will reveal the full meaning of His words:

- He will take bread, bless and break it and give the blessed bread to the twelve and say: “take and eat – this is my body” (Mt 26:26).

Later, He will take a cup of wine – bless it and say: “take and drink, this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant, do this in memory of me” (1 Cor 11:25). The blood of the old covenant animal sacrifices points to the blood of Christ Jesus in God, the Son of God, the second person of the Blessed Trinity. In His own words as God, He gave His own body and blood to His church to eat and drink, fulfilling what He said in John Chapter Six: “Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you” (Jn 6:53).

Jesus is Life, through whom all things were made, including all animals and human beings (Nicene Creed). When we eat His flesh and drink His blood, in the consecrated bread and wine, we have His divine life in us keeping us spiritually alive. He is the vine, and we are His branches connected to Him. Through Him (His body and blood) the branch has life (Jn 14:6) (Jn 15:1-7).

The blood of animals in the Old Testament sacrifices could not atone for sin, but they were a sign of the new covenant sacrifice, the blood of Christ, the Son of God, offered to the Father in atonement for our sins (Heb 10:1-29).

On this feast of Corpus Christi, we celebrate the fact that Jesus gives His people His own life saving blood, through the holy sacrifice of the Mass, which He gave to His church on Holy Thursday, at the Last Supper Passover meal.

Jesus is the spotless Passover lamb whose blood atones for the sins of the world.

Through our sins, we have broken our blood-covenant with God the Father and fell out of favor with Him. The blood of His son Jesus, when offered to the Father on our behalf, atones for our sins, redeems us, and brings us back into favor with God the Father. Only the blood of Jesus can do this.

As we struggle and labor in this world, we recall these words of Jesus: “Come to me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28). These words of Jesus are fulfilled when we receive His body (Corpus Christi) and His blood in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

What are some pious practices that strengthen our faith in the Eucharist?

- Meditate on the words of Jesus in John Ch. 6 (believe His words because He said them).
- Always receive holy communion worthily in the state of grace (CCC 1415).
- Make frequent visits to the Eucharist reserved in the tabernacle.
- Participate in Eucharistic hours of adoration whenever possible.
- Have a strong devotion to the Blessed Mother – she will always lead you to her son Jesus in the Eucharist, whom she received from the Apostles on numerous occasions.
- Ask God to give you a deep faith in our Lord’s real presence in the Holy Eucharist.
- When you receive holy communion mentally contemplate your blood comingling with His sacred blood.