

We take a bit of a detour after Easter and before Ordinary Time

Special solemnities

Holy Trinity last week

This coming Friday, the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Today, the Feast of the Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Also known as Corpus Christi

The day we celebrate one of our core beliefs as Catholics

That the bread and wine

Through the words given by Christ

Spoken by an ordained priest

Truly become his body and blood

Soul and divinity

Transubstantiation is the term coined by St Thomas Aquinas

Although they retain the accidental characteristics

That is the things that we can measure by our senses

They have substantially changed

It is no longer bread and wine

It is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ

His Real Presence in the Eucharist

He has chosen not only to remain with us

But to become food for our souls

To be with us in this life

And to lead us to our eternal home

How he does this is in the sacrifice of the Mass

A sacrifice that has deep roots in our Judeo-Christian faith

For our modern culture

Blood sacrifice seems very strange

But there are still some remnants that we recognize

Blood is thicker than water

Being blood brothers is a deep identity between two individuals

A blood transfusion is a lifesaving procedure

For the ancient people

Blood was seen as a special element

They believed it contained the essence of life

A divine force that gives life

And so blood sacrifices were a means of atonement

In our first reading

Moses comes to the people

He gives them the 10 Commandments

They respond: *We will do everything the Lord has told us*

So Moses seals the deal

He erects an altar

They sacrifice young bulls as peace offerings

Moses takes half the blood

And splashes it on the altar

Then he offers the people the covenant again

They respond the same way

And he sprinkles the rest of the blood upon them

This symbolizes the unity of humanity with divinity

In a sense, humanity has become blood brothers with divinity

This sacrifice is central to a faithful Jew

Down the road, the Temple was built

The Temple became their identity

For them, it was God's dwelling place on earth

Where God called all nations to himself

In a sense, it was the Garden of Eden

And it was where sacrifices were offered

It was where the Jews came to make atonement for sinning

For failing to live up the 10 Commandments

The Temple was in action 24 / 7

But in a special way on the Day of Atonement

The one day each year the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holy's

The most sacred place in the Temple

This is what St Paul is referring to in the Letter to the Hebrews

The High Priest would imitate the sacrifice of Moses

Rededicate the altar and the people

By sprinkling blood on them

All of the sacrifices of the Israelite people

From Moses to the time of Christ

Find their fulfillment in the sacrifice of Christ

For if the blood of goats and bulls

The sprinkling of a heifer's ashes can sanctify

How much more will the blood of Christ,

Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God,

Cleanse our consciousness from dead works

To worship the living God

**The blood of Christ is the great sacrifice that restores mankind to
righteousness**

Christ doesn't enter the Holy of Holy's

To offer the blood of an animal

He enters heaven itself

Offering his own blood

To reconcile humanity with divinity

**We need to understand this background to understand what
happens at the Last Supper**

When the night before his passion

Jesus takes the bread

This is my Body

Taking the cup and giving thanks

This is my blood

Christ is the priest and the victim

He is the Temple, the Holy of Holy's

His blood is not given to be sprinkled externally on his people

It is offered to us to consume

To be a meal for our spirits and souls

Not so it can become nourishment for our bodies

But so we can be transformed into his body

The Eucharist we celebrate at Mass is a meal

But it is more

It is a re-presentation of his sacrifice

Where we enter into the Last Supper

We enter into his passion, death and resurrection

We do not offer him up again and again

There is one sacrifice, for all eternity

And we are blessed to participate in it at every Mass

When we begin to grasp little bits of this

We begin to grasp what the Mass is

A sacrificial meal

Think of a breakfast platter

There are eggs and bacon on the plate

The eggs are the chicken's contribution to the meal

The bacon is the pig's commitment to the meal

When we come to the Mass

Our lives are our contribution

The bishop's, the priests

Everyone here

And in some mysterious way, everyone in the world

Those present and those not present

Our presence here has an effect on those not here

Our prayers are efficacious for the salvation of the world

Sometimes we participate well

Sometimes we don't do such a good job

But no matter how much or how little we contribute

Jesus Christ is present

Not contributing

But fully committed

His body and blood

Shed once and for all, for you and for me

For the forgiveness of our sins and for those of many

There can be no more personal or intimate relationship than this

Receiving and consuming his most sacred body and blood

This feast of the Eucharist is what we are called to participate in

Every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation

Not for what we can get out of it

Not to be entertained

Not to enjoy fellowship

Not because there is or is not great music

Not to hear great preaching

Like the accidents we can taste and feel on the hosts

These may be nice

But they are not why we are here

And the lack of any of these cannot be why we stay away

We come to be fed

With the Word of God in Sacred Scripture

And to receive the food of the angels

The Body and Blood

The Soul and Divinity of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ

A meal that is intimately tied to sacrifice

Offered once

For our salvation

And for the salvation of the entire world