

**Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ
Corpus Christi Sunday**

**This feast has to have a special meaning for Catholic Christians
Even more so than for our separated brothers and sisters
Because this is one of the core beliefs we have that separate us
So much of what we believe is similar**

So we have to ask

Why not invite all to the Eucharistic table?

To answer this, we need to understand our teaching

This teaching can be a bit confusing

Because we can look at it in two ways

We can see that it speaks of the Body of Christ

As in the visible image of Christ in the world

By the power of baptism, we are all priests, prophets and kings

The concrete way Christ touches so many in our world

Through his body, he feeds his people

He heals them

The body of Christ, in this sense, is his hands and feet

His voice in the world

In many respects we share this with all baptized Christians

But there is a spiritual aspect as well

The Body of Christ in the real presence of the Eucharist

The bread and wine that become the body and blood of Jesus Christ

And for this, we need the ministerial priesthood

The ordained ministry, in apostolic succession

And this is where we are separated from our brothers and sisters

For many, the bread and wine symbolize Christ

Or for some, it never loses the substance of bread and wine

Christ takes it over for a time, then leaves

But Christ promised

I will never leave you orphans

His promise never to leave us is fulfilled in the Eucharist

In fact, the spiritual aspect is the foundation for the physical

Without the spiritual, the physical would cease

It might become a way to ease our conscience

It might become simply a social cause

But it would have no salvific meaning

So it is necessary to understand the spiritual

To build the physical

First, we need to see that at its heart, the Eucharist is a sacrifice

Sacrifices have been around as long as humans have been

We do this because we fall into error

We think of God as made in our image

Kind of like superman

On steroids

A really big, really strong, really old guy

If there was something I would like

God would want the same thing times ten

We have always sought ways to honor God or our gods in many ways

We have tried to make a deal with God

You give me this and I will do that

We offer goats or bulls or wheat or precious metal

And we ask for good weather or victory in battle

Some have even offered human sacrifice

But we are made in His image and likeness

We have to find the way to worship Him that He desires

And it is not real difficult, because He tells us

A humble and contrite heart I desire

And to offer the Eucharist *'In memory of me'*

In our reading from Genesis, Abraham has returned from battle

His nephew Lot had been kidnapped

Along with many of his kinsmen

It seemed hopeless, but Abraham went after them

And he was successful in freeing them

Coming home, they prepared to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving

And along comes Melchisedek

Offering a sacrifice of bread and wine

Not the blood of an animal

He blesses Abraham

Abraham recognizes him as a priest

Even though he was not of the priestly class

Abraham offers a tithe to Melchisedek

Later teaching recalls that Jesus is a priest in the order of Melchisedek

One without beginning or end

In our second reading St Paul tells us what he received from the Lord

Not something he learned from the Apostles

He speaks of the Last Supper

When Christ took the bread

Gave thanks

Broke the bread

And said '*do this in remembrance of me*'

He took the cup

The new covenant in my blood

Do this in remembrance of me

Not in remembrance of Paul

In remembrance of Christ

Proclaiming his sacrifice

His death, until he comes again

Our Gospel has Eucharistic overtones as well

But it also speaks to the other sense of the body of Christ

The miraculous feeding of the 5000

The people had been with Christ all day

Nothing to eat

The disciples were concerned for their well-being

Dismiss them so they can go find something to eat

When Christ tells them to give them food

They reply all we have is five loaves and two fish

What is that for so many?

So Christ had them divide into groups

He took the bread and fish

To remind us of what he would offer at his passion

His body and blood

He gave thanks

Reminding us of the Passover tradition

Giving thanks to God

In fact the meaning of the term Eucharist in Greek is 'to give thanks'

Said the blessing

His prayer in Gethsemane

His offering to God *'Thy will be done'*

Broke them

His crucifixion, where his body was broken

Offered to God for our sins

Gave it to the disciples

Signifying the role of the Church in the world

Jesus could have dispersed the food himself

But he chose to use the disciples

Just as he chose to set up the Church to carry out his mission

Peter would be the rock upon which he would build his church

The fragments left over were gathered up

This meal was not only for those gathered

The Eucharist is not meant only for Catholics

The 12 baskets showed God's superabundance in fulfilling our needs

His desire to save the entire world

This is what lies behind the saying that *'outside the Catholic Church*

There is no salvation'

Salvation comes from the sacrifice of Christ

One single drop of His blood is enough to save the world

This is the Church Christ himself began

It is in the Catholic Mass that Christ's body and blood enter into our world in time

Then we go into the world

Taking him with us

Now we see the Eucharist is our food

It changes us into Christ's body

We are to go and be Christ in the world

Beyond the walls of this building

The Spirit moves where he wills

We hear the wind, but do not know where it comes from

Or where it goes

The Catholic Church is the true apostolic church

The power of Christ handed on to his apostles

To say the words of consecration

To say the words of Christ in confession and the other sacraments

The ministerial priesthood

Handed down from the apostles

Gives a spiritual authority

When a validly ordained priest says the words of consecration

He is speaking in the name of Jesus Christ

Not just saying the words

Anyone can say the words

But they don't mean the same thing

At the dawn of creation

God said '*Let there be light*'

And *'let there be land and sea and sky'*

And they were made

We believe in creation

So at Mass, through the ministry of the priesthood

Christ says *'This is my body, this is my blood*

Do this in memory of me'

And we believe they are no longer bread and wine

They are a new creation

They are his body and blood

Feeding the Body of Christ spiritually

And like the fragments left over

We are gathered up

And sent out to feed the entire world

In this sense the Eucharist is for the entire world

Not to be consumed

That is reserved for practicing Catholics

That is why, if we are in an irregular marriage

If we have not fasted

If we have serious sin on our souls

Even Catholics are asked not to present themselves for Communion

But we are all called to worship each and every Sunday

For the salvation of our soul and for the salvation of the world