

## Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ [Corpus Christi] 2013

♪♪ Nada te turbe, nada t'espante, qu'ien a Dios tiene nada le falta

Nada te turbe, nada t'espante, solo Dios basta. ♪♪

[Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you. The one who holds on to God lacks nothing.

... God alone is enough! [Teresa of Avila – written in the cover of her “breviary”, her daily prayer book]

The song and the Gospel proclaim: *God alone is enough!*

I know when I forget that, I get disturbed, anxious and afraid. How about you?

St. Francis was as clear as St Teresa, writing in a previous time. He wrote a wonderful prayer for his best friend, Brother Leo. Leo was depressed, and Francis reached out to him by giving him a prayer which speaks to God using many names [some say that this prayer reflects the visit of Francis to the Sultan, the Muslim leader in Damietta];

*You are love, you are wisdom, you are humility,*

*You are patience, you are beauty,*

*You are security, you are inner peace, you are joy;*

*You are justice, you are moderation,*

*You are all our riches, you are **enough** for us.*

After Leo prayed this, many times, I suppose, his depression lifted.

I like to call that Franciscan prozac!

I am tempted many times to worship a *false* god I name “*enough*”, and to be anxious and afraid that I am not good *enough*, that there will not be *enough* time or money, that I will not be strong *enough* to get through some situation.

The Gospel today proclaims that only God is enough!

It is the only miracle story which is in all four Gospels.

In the story, Jesus says: “Give them some food yourselves.”

The apostles answer, “we don’t have *enough*.”

Jesus says, by action as much as by words, “When I am with you, you have enough.”

The Spirit then performs *two* miracles, the first one was to get more than 5,000 people to organize themselves into groups of 50 and to sit down. [there were probably more than 15,000 – if most of the men had wives and children there.

The Spirit says, in effect, because I am in you, you are enough, you can help each other.

Then he feeds them all – and there are leftovers!

Some commentators say that what happened was that Jesus inspired the people to share what they had brought.

That reminds me of an old Chinese story about the difference between heaven and hell.

Hell is described as people sitting around a wonderful banquet table, filled with the tastiest food imaginable, yet they are starving - because they had to eat it with four foot long forks, and cannot get the food into their mouths.

Heaven is the same wonderful banquet, the same 4' forks, but a group of people who are happy and well fed, because they are using the forks *to feed each other*.

The reading from the first letter to the Corinthians is *our* story - the story of how we are fed by Christ and the Spirit of God and are called to feed one another. On the night he was betrayed, when everything seemed to be falling apart, Jesus gave himself as our food. He says, "take and eat, this is my body, this is my blood." Christians have been diving into this mystery since that Holy Thursday night.

This feast of the Body and Blood of Christ was established in 1264. It is about that night. It's also called Corpus Christi, which is Latin for the Body of Christ and the name of a city in Texas. People of all Christian traditions have written, discussed and argued for centuries about the Body and Blood of Christ [also called the "Blessed Sacrament"]. Is this mystery about the meal we share with each other as *members* of the Body of Christ? Or is it about the sacrament we reserve for the sick? Or is it about the real presence of Christ which we worship in the tabernacle?

And the answer the Church gives is YES! It is **all three**, -- and its meaning is diminished when one aspect alone is elevated above the others or overlooked & neglected.

When you hear the phrase, "Body of Christ", what do you think of? When St. Paul uses it, it usually means the people who are the disciples of Christ. But it also means the Christ we receive in Communion. Both are part of the Christian Scriptures. If we are to understand what this feast means, we need to always keep those two ideas together.

One Theologian expresses it this way, "When we receive the consecrated host, we eat the Church; when we receive the precious blood of Christ, we drink the cross."

We "eat the Church" - we commit ourselves to love and care for the whole Body of Christ, our sisters and brothers and all the others Christ loves.

We "drink the cross." One of the reasons the Church restored the practice of drinking from the cup at Mass is to express the full meaning of the Eucharist, since this liturgical action expresses our willingness to accept the cross of Christ, and our faith that we are already beginning to celebrate the heavenly banquet with him.

In the reading from St. Paul, and in the words of the Eucharistic Prayer, we hear the command, "Do this in memory of me." If we are to understand the full meaning of the Eucharist, we need to hear not only the command to celebrate Mass today, here and all over the world, as important as that is. We need to hear it this way:

Love one another as I have loved you! - Do **this** in memory of me!

Forgive one another as I have forgiven you! - Do **this** in memory of me!

Feed one another as I have fed you! - Do **this** in memory of me!

Let us pray that we can truly live the command of Christ.

To the extent that we act out those meanings of the command of Christ, to that extent we will become what we receive, as many saints and holy persons have said and done.

We will live the meaning of this song:

♪♪ Amen, el Cuerpo de Cristo [the Body of Christ].

Amen, la sangre del señor [The blood of the Lord].

Eating your body, drinking your blood, we become what we receive, Amen, amen. ♪♪

Genesis 14:18-20 [Melchizedek brought out bread and wine]

Psalms 110 ["You are a priest forever, in the line of Melchizedek"]

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 [when you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord]

Luke 9:11b-17 [They all ate and had enough]