

Lk 9:11b-17; Gen 14:18-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26 Gift of Corpus Christi

In the year 1263 a priest was having doubts about the real presence. He stopped to celebrate mass in Bolsena, Italy. And when he raised the host during the consecration, it turned into flesh and it began to bleed all over the altar.

Long before that, in the year 700, in Lanciano, Italy, a monk was having doubts about the real presence. As he celebrated mass, during the consecration, the host actually turned into flesh and the wine turned into blood.

To this day, you can still see the flesh in a monstrance they expose every day and the blood in a glass chalice. The blood has congealed into five clots.

A hospital lab tested the flesh and blood. The flesh is heart tissue. The blood is type AB positive, the same as on the shroud of Turin which covered Jesus' face.

What is so amazing, is that when you weigh only one blood clot, it weighs the same as all five together; two of them weigh the same as all five. No matter how you combine them, they always weigh the same.

That means Jesus is fully present in every particle of the Eucharist no matter how small.

That is our food for the journey, the bread of angels, the gift of love from God to us. Jesus gave us that gift at the Last Supper. The second reading contains the earliest recorded words of Jesus:

That on the night Jesus was betrayed, He took bread, He gave thanks, He broke it and said: *This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me* (1 Cor 11:24).

In the same way, He took the cup, after supper saying: *This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me* (1 Cor 11:25).

Why did Jesus do that? Two reasons: (1) presence and (2) life.

(1) On that altar, Jesus becomes present to us. Like He promised: *I am with you always, until the end of [time]* (Mt 28:20). And like He said: *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him* (Jn 6:56).

(2) And, on that altar Jesus gives us life. Like He promised: *I came so that [you] might have life and have it more abundantly* (Jn 10:10).

That means we have life in Him, which is meaningful, purposeful, joyful and eternal, because: *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day* (Jn 6:54).

How does that work? You are what you eat. Like St. Augustine heard Jesus say: *You will not change me into yourself as you would food of your flesh; but you will be changed into me.* In other words, the Holy Eucharist transforms us into Jesus.

How should we respond? Like Abraham did in the first reading. The priest-king Melchizedek, was an intermediary with God. He offered bread and wine, and blessed Abraham. Then Abraham in thanksgiving, gave 10% of everything to God (Gen 14:18-20).

Did you know the word “Eucharist” actually means thanksgiving? So, we should live always giving thanks by living a “eucharistic” life.

That means: (1) make Jesus present, and (2) be life-giving.

We saw that in today’s gospel. The day was drawing to a close. Everyone was tired. The apostles asked Jesus to dismiss the crowd so they could go buy food.

But Jesus said: *Give them some food yourselves* (Lk 9:13). That was impossible! Five loaves and two fish couldn’t feed the 5000 (Lk 9:13-14). And Jesus knew it.

But Jesus wanted them to do what they could with what they had to feed the crowd, and to trust that God would take care of the rest.

And then the miracle happened. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up to heaven, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to the disciples to distribute (Lk 9:16).

They literally became partners with Jesus in making His love present and bringing life into the world.

All ate and were satisfied. And there were twelve wicker baskets left over (Lk 9:16).

In the same way, we are called to continue the miracle of feeding others through Jesus. Jesus wants us to take what little we have and to give it away...to share it...and trust that God will take care of the rest.

And when we do that, a miracle happens. There will be an abundance of God's blessings left over.

That's why, when Jesus said: *do this in memory of me*, He wasn't talking only about coming to mass. The Holy Eucharist is not a spectator sport. It's a commitment.

In many places there are still Corpus Christi processions in which the monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament is brought to the people in the streets.

That is our commitment: to bring the Holy Eucharist—Christ in us...into the world—to make Jesus present and to be life-giving.

So, this week, let's feed family and friends, strangers and even enemies with the food of eternal life.

Let's share with them what Jesus is doing in our lives. Let's ask them if we can pray for them and pray for them anyway.

Let's show them we are the miracle of the Holy Eucharist, which makes Jesus present and is life-giving: by loving, forgiving, listening, caring, and helping anyone and everyone in need, in any way we can.

Think about it! In a few moments, we are going to receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist! Let's try to feel His real presence alive inside of us.

And, may we never forget that we are the Body of Christ who make Jesus present and bring life into this world—until He comes again in glory (1 Cor 11:26). Amen.