

“The Eucharist is the heart and the summit of the Church’s life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all his members with his sacrifice...by this sacrifice he pours out his graces of salvation on his Body which is the Church” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1407).

The Eucharist: The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ

The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ gives us a great opportunity to celebrate (possibly with a Eucharistic procession after Mass) in a special way the gift of Christ himself to us and to reflect on the place of the Eucharist in our lives. The readings of the Mass of the solemnity, among other things describe the Eucharist in the context of different sacrifices offered to God in the different stages of our salvation history. The first reading, the book of Exodus describes how Moses mediated on behalf of the people of Israel in offering a sacrifice to God, a covenant which was sealed with the blood of an animal. The second reading, the letter to the Hebrews describes the sacrifice of the New Testament in which Christ is the mediator and the sacrificed. The Gospel describes Jesus’ final Passover meal with his disciples where he instituted the Eucharist, the sacrament of his body and blood.

In the Eucharistic celebration (The Mass) we celebrate and immortalize the great sacrifice of Christ, an everlasting victory over sin and death. The words of the institution of the Eucharist which the priest repeats during consecration at Mass describe the Eucharist as a sacrifice and meal, which Christ invites us to take, eat and drink. It is the spiritual food of the soul which brings us nearer to Christ, increases the life of grace within us, helps us to avoid sins and their occasions, and brings us to life everlasting (John 6: 52-59). The Eucharist will serve these purposes in our life if we participate in it with faith, devotion, and attention. The attention we give to the liturgy of the word prepares us for the liturgy of the Eucharist. The word we have shared becomes source of our strength as we live the sacred space to become Eucharistic people.

We become Eucharistic people by allowing the life of Christ to direct and guide us. Also, it is by our conscientious effort to imitate the life of Christ, whom we share in his body and blood that we become the Eucharistic people. In the feast of today we ask ourselves and reflect on: Do I believe that what I receive in the Mass is really the body and blood of Christ? If I believe, what efforts am I making to receive it worthily? Does the Eucharist I receive have any effect in my life? What aspect of my life do I need the healing presence of the Eucharistic Jesus? We pray that the good Lord will give us the grace to accept and appreciate the gift he has given us in the Eucharist. Amen.

“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him” (John 6: 54-56).