

Corpus Christi-B

June 7, 2021

St. Patrick

---

We hear these words during every Mass: **“Take, this is my Body”...“This is my Blood of the covenant.”**

It’s the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. What do these words mean to us, and how do we teach this mystery to one another, and to our children?

I remember vividly when, fresh out of the seminary 45 years ago, the pastor of the parish where I was first assigned told me to meet with the second-graders who were about to make their First Communion. The pastor instructed me to make sure that they “understood” what they were doing when they came up for Communion. And I remember how I did it, because--beyond all the theories--it forms the basis of my faith. I asked each child: Who is the one person whom you trust the most? Their answers: My grandparent, or one of my parents. And then I asked each of them: “If your grandmother told you something, would you believe her?” A child blurted out, “Sure...because she loves me. She wouldn’t tell me a lie.”

Then I made the link to what we do here: “You know, there are some things about Holy Communion which I don’t understand. Even after we pray the Holy Spirit to come down upon the bread and wine, and change them into Jesus’ Body and Blood...well, it still tastes like wine; the bread doesn’t look any different. Still, I know that Jesus loves us. I trust him, and I take him on his word.”

Six weeks ago I got a telephone call from someone, and he told me thought his mother, in her late 80s, was near death. I had known Barbara for almost twenty years, and he asked me to visit her. I did so that afternoon.

In her retirement Barbara had been a daily communicant. However, because of the pandemic, and a debilitating illness, she had not received Communion for a year. As I visited her, I took note that she was happy, not any way discouraged. We talked, and she shared from her heart, knowing death might be near. We celebrated the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, and she received Holy Communion. She told me how much the Eucharist means to her.

A week later, Barbara died. I officiated at her Funeral Mass. When I read her obituary, I was stunned that the title “Doctor” preceded her name. She was a

clinical psychologist who traveled the world and was noted in academia. Over the years of her retirement and coming to daily Mass, she never told me about her credentials and accomplishments. She was Barbara, and she loved the Eucharist. She took Jesus on his word, and he nourished her for her journey.

Sixteen hundred years ago, the bishop of Jerusalem at that time, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, gave teachings to the newly-baptized about the faith. His last teaching dealt with the Eucharist. I quote from his teaching, made in the 300s.

**“...You hear the song leader inviting you with a sacred melody to communion in the holy mysteries, in the words, ‘O taste and see that the Lord is good,’ (Ps 33:9). Entrust not the judgment to your bodily palate, but to unwavering faith....**

**“When the Master himself has explicitly said of the bread, ‘This is my body,’ will anyone still dare to doubt? When he is himself our warranty, saying, ‘This is my blood,’ who will ever waver and say it is not his blood?”**

A second-grader about to receive Communion for the first time...In her late 80s, Barbara receiving the Eucharist for the last time...Now, you and I: We take Jesus’ on his word, and we trust him.

*General Intercessions*

*Corpus Christi*

*June 6, 2021*

**Nourish our hearts by your living Word and through your Body and Blood in the Eucharist; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Unite peoples in a rich tapestry of diversity. Empower us to defeat racism in our church and nation, leading us to show your justice; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Renew our families during these summer weeks, giving safety in travel, rest in our breaks from work, and joy in our prayer; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Bless the members of our new Parish Pastoral Council, and all within our parish, that we might be *your* hands, *your* feet, and *your* presence in a world aching for hope; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Raise to new life all who have died with their hope fixed on you, especially those who have died from Covid-19; we pray to you, O Lord—**

*(for the 5:15 Mass only—)*

**Strengthen Samuel as he celebrates his First Holy Communion today, that he might always be close to you, O Jesus; we pray to you, O Lord—**

