Corpus Christi

June 14, 2020

At a time when we are limited in our ability to participate in the Holy Mass, we will not be silent in professing a core belief of the Catholic Faith. In the reception of Holy Communion, we receive the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ our Divine Savior. This is the life-giving bread come down from heaven, Jesus Christ, gift of our Father.

When Jesus affirmed this truth, many had difficulty accepting it. The Israelites knew how blest they were, having been chosen by God to be His people—how he freed them from slavery and gave them a land to dwell in. He had chosen to nourish them in their sojourn in the desert with Mana to sustain them. But how could they accept that now they needed to be fed by someone they saw as an ordinary man? Many of them were unable to accept the next step in their life’s journey of becoming one with God.

Let us go back to our first reading from the Book of Deuteronomy. Moses said to the people: “Remember how for forty years now the LORD, your God, has directed all your journeying in the desert, so as to test you by affliction and find out whether or not it was your intention to keep his commandments. He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your fathers, in order to show you that not by bread alone does one live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the LORD.” The Israelites came to not only accept this bread but to cherish and rely upon it for their spiritual and bodily existence.

Could this not be our time of testing and affliction to draw us into a deeper relationship with Christ? What does it mean for us to receive the Body of Christ? Hear the words of St. Paul again, “Brothers and sisters: The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?” We are called to be one in his suffering and in his eternal life. We participate in his redeeming act. Do we refuse to allow ourselves to be caught up in his great love for us? Do we allow our pride to keep us distant from the Lord?

Reception of the Eucharist is acceptance in the life of God. It is a step on our journey to be one with the Lord. If this be true, and it is, it calls us to act with the mind and heart of Christ. We cannot be receivers of Holy Communion and not be in communion with Christ and His Body the Church our brothers and sisters. Christ came to save all people and he calls us to participate in this saving act by following the commandments: “Love one another as I have loved you.” It is this love that can remove Pride, Envy, Wrath, Gluttony, Lust, Sloth, and Greed—the seven deadly sins—from our lives.

May we pray and act in such ways that we can return to the reception of the Holy Eucharist knowing we are even more in communion with our sisters and brothers. We know their pain, suffering and poverty—for we too have become one in Christ who suffered, died, and rose from the dead and feeds us with his sacramental life and resurrected body.