

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ!

One year when I took vacation down at **Orange Beach**, I recall scanning through some of the **local magazines** on the **check-in counter** for some **beach activities**.

One of the magazines had a **whole page** that listed the **area Churches** ... with information that would be helpful to **out of town tourists**.

The page was entitled, "*As we worship*" and it listed ...
10 Major groupings of Churches... naming **33 Churches** in total.
As I read down **the list** I noticed something right away.

All of them offered Sunday services. **But how many of them** do you think offered opportunities to worship God in community on other days of the week?

Only 2 ... the 2 Catholic Churches!

1. **Our Lady of the Gulf** in **Gulf Shores** offers daily Mass at **8am**
2. **St. Thomas by the Sea** in **Orange Beach** offers daily Mass at **9 am**

And it struck me **how fortunate** we are as **Catholics** ...
that we're able to come and worship God in **Holy Mass** ...
not just on Sundays ... but **every day** of the week ... **every day** of the year!

And **this worldwide practice of praying the Mass every day** gives literal meaning to the **petition** we make in the **Lord's Prayer** where we say ...
"Father ... give us this day ... our daily bread."

It's here we recall that **Jesus** said of Himself in **John 6** ...
*"I am the Bread come down from Heaven ...
Whoever eats this Bread will live forever ...
And the Bread that I will give is my Flesh for the life of the world."*

The only way we get to eat **the Flesh of Jesus** ... is in **the Mass**.

It's **there** ... at **that holy Meal** ... **that Jesus** becomes truly present ...
veiled under the appearance of **bread** ... as He was at **the Last Supper** ...
to nourish those in attendance with **his very Body and Blood**.

Now **since Mass** is prayed in **Catholic Churches** ... each and every day ...
all around the world ... that means that the praying of the Mass never stops!
And **if the Mass** is truly **the re-presentation** of **Jesus** to the Father
in that once for all sacrifice
begun on Holy Thursday and consummated on Good Friday,
then the **words of the Prophet Malachi** have been fulfilled in **the Catholic Church**.

In the **Last Book** of the O T, the **Prophet Malachi** declares that the day will come where:
“*From the rising of the sun to its setting, my name is great among the nations,
and everywhere they bring sacrifice to my name and a pure offering.*”

Jesus is the Once For All Sacrifice.

Jesus is the only Pure Offering.

And **He** is offered to the Father **unceasingly** in the **worldwide Catholic Church**
from the rising of the sun to the setting.

Yes, by God’s design ... our worship of Him ... never ends!

And **even if you’re unable to attend Daily Mass yourself**,
you can unite your prayers to those being lifted up at **Daily Mass ...**
thereby, offering your praise and petitions and your very self to the Father ...
in union with Jesus, the Son of God ... the only pure offering!

In **Catholic Schools** and **PSR classes** we teach our kids to do this by praying the
MORNING OFFERING

O **Jesus**, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
I offer you all my **prayers, works, joys, and sufferings** of this day
For all the intentions of Your most Sacred Heart,
In union with the most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world,
In reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all,
And in particular for the Holy Father’s intentions.
I wish to gain all the indulgences attached to the prayers I shall say
And the good works I shall perform this day.

Today is a feast of this Holy Offering, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

Some of you may recall that **years ago** this feast was referred to as the feast of
“*Corpus Christi*”. That’s the Latin expression for “*Body of Christ*”.

Today the Church refers to this feast as the “*Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ*”.
A **title** which refers more completely to what Our Lord did at the **Last Supper**,
when He offered Himself for us... His **Body** and His **Blood**.

In **Mass**, **Jesus** is fully and substantially present in **both** the **Bread** and the **Wine**.

So no matter which one we consume, we receive the whole Jesus.
The **beauty of receiving both species** is that it more fully represents what took place
at the **Last Supper** where **Jesus gave Himself** to the **Apostles** under the appearance
of **both Bread & Wine**.

Do you believe that **Jesus** is truly present in the **Eucharist**?

You know from time to time **polls** will come out that show that **only a percentage** of **Catholics** really believe in the **True Presence** of Jesus Christ in **Holy Communion**.

Some polls indicate that **less than 50%** of **Catholics** believe ...
that the **Eucharist** is **really Jesus!**
How would you respond to such a poll?

You know, there's **no scientist** in the world
that can prove **that Jesus** is really there in the Eucharist.
It is a **miracle** ... and a **mystery!**

The Eucharist is a **mystery** that **we're** capable of comprehending ... **if we try**.
God wants **us** to grasp the reality of his love and his presence among us.

St. Paul speaks of this **when he says** in his letter to the **Ephesians**,
"God has give us the wisdom, to understand full the mystery, the plan he was pleased to decree in Christ." **The mystery of the Eucharist** is clearly revealed in **Scripture**.

I've had **converts** tell me that when they first came to Mass and heard the name **Melchizedek** used in the Eucharistic Prayer, they didn't know who that was ...
for they had never heard that name before.

Well, he's there in Genesis 14, in the verses we proclaimed in our **First Reading**,
Where this **Melchizedek**, who is both **a King** and **a Priest**, offers thanks to God.
And how does he do it? With a bloody animal sacrifice?
No! With the unbloody offering of bread and wine.

This event prefigured the event that **Jesus** would institute at the **Last Supper** as the **new way** to give thanks and praise to the Father. It was **there** that **Jesus**, who is also **a King** and **a Priest** ... the **King of Kings** and the **Eternal High Priest** ... took **bread and wine**, blessed it, broke in & transformed it into His own Body and Blood!

St. Paul recounts this event in our **Second Reading**.
Now, realize that **Paul** wasn't at the Last Supper.
Paul never met Jesus when Jesus walked the earth.

It was **only after** Jesus had died, risen, and ascended to the Father **that Paul** had his personal experience of **Jesus**.

It was **while Paul** was on his way to **Damascus** to arrest more Christians ... that he was blinded by light and he heard Jesus ask him, *"Why are you persecuting me?"*
Then, after regaining his sight and being baptized, Paul was filled with a great zeal for Jesus, and learned from the Apostles **what Jesus did at the Last Supper**.

In today's Reading from 1st Corinthians, Paul says,

*“For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that **the Lord Jesus**, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and after he had given thanks, broke it and said, ‘This is my body. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way also the cup, saying, ‘This is the cup of my blood. Do this in remembrance of me.’”*

Jesus used Bread and Wine not bloody animals as **the sign** of the New Covenant.

In saying, “*Do this in remembrance of me,*” **Jesus consecrated His Apostles** to stand in His place as **Priests**, with **the power** to transform the **simple elements** of **bread and wine** into Jesus' Body and Blood ... for all time!

This is what happens in every **Mass** ... **Jesus becomes truly present** to us veiled under the appearance of **bread and wine**.

It is a **great miracle**. But we know **Jesus has the power** to perform great miracles.

In our **Gospel** today, **Jesus clearly performs a great miracle** ... feeding 5000 people by multiplying 5 loaves and 2 fish.

In doing this, He showed that he could replicate bread to feed them **physically**. And at **the Last Supper**, He showed that He could replicate Himself in the bread to feed them **spiritually**.

Do you believe that? You know there are **many people** who do not. Out of **7 Billion** people in the world ...

only **1.3 Billion** believe that **Jesus** is truly present in the Eucharist!

For instance, as you heard last week, the **Muslims** don't believe in the Trinity!

They don't believe that **Jesus** is the **son of God**, let alone believe that He is with us today by **the miracle** of **Transubstantiation**.

Jesus worked countless miracles ... during His time on earth ... and in **the 364,000 Masses** prayed every day!

. **Muhammed** never worked one miracle !

For those of us that are **Catholic** we need to remind ourselves that **Holy Communion** is not just a symbol of our unity in **Christ** ... Holy Communion ... is Christ.

In his great love for us, **Jesus** comes to us to feed us with **Himself**. The **Eucharist** is the **Body and Blood of Jesus**..

By worthily receiving Him into our bodies, we can transform our hearts to be like His. We can prepare ourselves to be in union with God forever in heaven.

Remember how the **Apostles** looked in disbelief at the **Risen Jesus** when He appeared to them in the **Upper Room**. They thought they were seeing a ghost.

But **Jesus** reassured them, ***“It is I.”***

As you come forward to receive **Holy Communion**, hear **Jesus** say to you, ***“It is I.”***

Recognize that it’s **really Him** in **Holy Communion**, that **The Creator** comes to the Creature. **Jesus** comes to love us, to heal us, to transform us and to strengthen us.

Jesus is **there** in the **Bread** each time the **Priest** says the words, ***“This is my Body.”***

Jesus is **there** in the **Wine** each time the **Priest** says the words, ***“This is my Blood.”***

Let’s treasure **the food** we’ve been given.

God feeds us with **true Bread from Heaven** when He feeds us with **Himself**.

Let’s give thanks and praise to God for His loving care for feeding us with the **Most Holy Body and Blood of His Son ... Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!**