Precious Body and Blood of Christ — June 11, 2023

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

Perhaps the greatest grace given to the Roman Catholic Church in the years since the Second Vatican Council has been the gradual recovery of the experience of the church as the people of God and the body of Christ. Only a short time ago, many of us Catholics would not have understood what St. Augustine was talking about in this passage; “it is your own mystery which is placed on the Lord's table.”

St. Augustine expresses the rich, many-leveled appreciation the church possessed for a thousand years of the sacramental presence of the risen Lord, both in the church assembled and in the sacrament of the communion in the body and blood of the Lord. This feast offers us an opportunity to reflect on St. Augustine's challenge: “It is to what you are that you reply 'Amen', and by replying subscribe. For you are told 'the body of Christ,' and you reply 'Amen'. Be a member of the body of Christ, and let your ‘Amen' be true.

When the minister presents us with the eucharistic bread and says “The body of Christ,” how do we understand this? When the eucharistic wine is offered with the statement “The blood of Christ,” to what do we think this refers to? Certainly, our 'Amen' is a statement of belief in the presence of Christ, but how big is our picture? How wide is our lens for experiencing the presence of Christ in its fullness? This is by no means to downplay the presence of Christ in the bread and wine, but how do we resonate with St. Augustine's idea that we, too, are the body of Christ? Before distributing communion in the Orthodox liturgy, the priest holds up the bread and wine and proclaims, “Holy things for the holy!” How firm is our “Amen” to the statement that we are holy, that the holy presence of Christ is there to be experienced in my pew mates?

It must be admitted that the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ (a duplication of Holy Thursday) was instituted at a time in the church's history when eucharistic theology and piety were not at their traditional best. This was a time when the understanding of the church as a people of God, who glory in their baptismal dignity was not widespread, when the traditional understanding of the Eucharist as primarily food at a communal meal was obscured. When communion of the laity was infrequent and when theological speculation was preoccupied with questions such as how Christ was present in the consecrated species. Since the Middle Ages, the church's eucharistic piety has not been characterized by an appreciation of the sacrament as an action of the believing community, but rather as a more or less static 'presence” in the species brought about by sacerdotal power.

No explanation can stand in the place of the liturgical enactment; no rational understanding of history offers the encounter with the Lord as does the sacrament. We must accept the invitation to the table of the Lord; come with our lives, hopefully bearing some scars received in selfless living. We must gather with one another, look at one another, hear the stories told, break the bread and share the cup in his memory. For it is in these actions that we encounter the Body of Christ.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**June 13**	**11:00AM**
Father’s Day Novena		
Wed.	**June 14**	**11:00AM**
Father’s Day Novena		
Thur.	**June 15**	**11:00AM**
Father’s Day Novena		
Fri.	**June 16**	**11:00AM**
Father’s Day Novena		
Sat.	**June 17**	**4:30PM**
Father’s Day Novena		
Sid Jensen Sr. †		
Sun.	**June 18**	**9:00AM**
Father’s Day Novena		
Manuel Contreras †		
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
Father’s Day Novena		
People of the Parish		

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