



ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

The Church in Central and Southern Indiana

Leadership Briefing

By Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Corpus Christi, Celebrating the Real Presence of Christ

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On Sunday, June 19, our Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi). From the very beginning of Christian history, holy men and women have reflected on Christ's presence in the Eucharist and have taught that the sacred transformation that occurs in the holy sacrifice of the Mass is a sign, and a cause, of the transformation that should occur in the lives of all who receive this great sacrament of Christ's love.



In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), Pope Francis has continued this tradition. As the Holy Father forcefully reminds us, the Eucharist “is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.”

We live in a time of confusion and controversy over what it means to be a Catholic Christian. Many diverse and dissonant voices tell us that our faith is old-fashioned and out of touch. Church teaching is often portrayed as repressive or intolerant. At best, our culture tends to regard religious teaching and practice as optional. At worst, those who take their faith seriously are regarded as a threat to ideologies that define the status quo.

It was not so different when Christianity was young. Controversies raged over the divinity of Christ, about the meaning of the sacraments, and over the lifestyles of those who had embraced Christianity and been baptized. Sometimes, these disagreements were discussed in civil, respectful ways. Other times, differences of understanding and belief resulted in ugliness, name-calling and even the shedding of blood.

In spite of years of controversies and changing practices, the foundational teachings of our Church have not changed. We may come to understand things differently (seeing them in a

new light), or we can mature in our ability to express what we believe, but the teaching we have received from the Apostles remains constant and unchanging even as new questions and controversies arise to challenge our most cherished beliefs and traditions.

Catholic teaching on the holy Eucharist is an excellent example. What catechumens, elect, and the newly baptized were taught in the fourth century, for example, is exactly what we teach today.

Before the invocation of the Blessed Trinity in the eucharistic prayer, the bread and wine are simply bread and wine. But after the celebrant invokes the Trinity, the elements are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. This is a great mystery which can be described, but never fully explained. (The technical term “transubstantiation” was not known in the 4th century, but the foundational teaching is clearly articulated by St. Cyril of Jerusalem in his catechetical instruction.)

Recalling these words of Jesus, the Catholic Church professes that, in the celebration of the Eucharist, bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and the instrumentality of the priest. Jesus said: "I am the living bread that came 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. . . . For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink" (Jn 6:51-55).

How clearly do we present this teaching today? Is it understood—in spite of all the confusion and controversy—that the Lord is truly present in the Eucharist? The real presence of Christ in the form of bread and wine is one of the most powerful truths of our faith. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, the Eucharist is “a memorial of [Christ’s] death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us” (#1323). We should teach this with unqualified clarity, and we should meditate on this great mystery in our daily prayers and especially in our adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Let’s cut through all the confusion and controversy to the heart of the matter. In the Eucharist, Christ gives himself to us really and truly. In this sacrament of love, the Son of God enters into our world once again and becomes one with us—Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity—in a perfect communion of love.

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), which we celebrate this weekend, is a time to rejoice in the great gift we have received in the holy Eucharist. This year we are using this joyful occasion to launch a National Eucharistic Revival, sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which will take place from 2022-2025. Near the end of this ambitious three year experience there will be a National

Eucharistic Congress hosted here in Indianapolis in 2024. What a great grace for our country as well as for our archdiocese!

Here in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis we will open the Eucharistic Revival with a special event on June 19, 2022 (see announcement below). You are encouraged to attend any portion of the day's events that fit into your schedule - come for part of the day or all of the day to join in our celebration of the Real Presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist.

The goal of this National Eucharistic Revival is “to renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist.” This revival will occur in three phases: Year One focuses on renewal at the diocesan level; Year Two will be focused on renewal at the parish level; Year Three will address the ongoing revival at all levels nationally with special attention to the mission to go forth with our faith especially in the peripheries.

Let us fall in love with this most precious sacrament. Let us allow ourselves to be fed by divine grace so that we will have the strength to love God above all else, and to teach and serve others as the Lord has commanded us to do.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Charles C. Thompson
Archbishop of Indianapolis

Eucharistic Revival Kick-Off

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis invites you to attend the Eucharistic Revival kick-off on June 19, 2022, from 1:00-6:30pm. This exciting day will feature masses at

1:00pm (English) and 3:00pm (Spanish, French), a family festival with food and service, and a Eucharistic procession along the streets of downtown Indianapolis ending with Adoration.



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Eucharistic Revival 22-25

Events will take place at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul (1347 Meridian Street, 46202), the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center (1400 Meridian Street, 46202), and St. John the Evangelist (126 W. Georgia Street, 46225). Additional information can be Found at www.eucharisticrevivalindy.org.

**A selection from “Worship of God in the Holy Mass Unites Us” a Pastoral Letter
by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson published December 14, 2021**

In this life, there is no greater way to foster this relationship to Christ and the Church than through the gift and mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist and the fruitful celebration of the Mass. Indeed, the Eucharist is at the heart of our relationship with Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. As we read in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (1963) of the Second Vatican Council, the Eucharist is our glimpse of the eternal banquet:



In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle; we sing a hymn to the Lord of glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the Saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ until He, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with Him in glory (8).

Therefore, we are called to celebrate the gift of the Sacrament of the Eucharist in the Mass until Jesus comes again in glory. And doing so, we stand side-by-side with the Angels and the Saints in joyful expectation of our Lord’s return. Anticipating Jesus’ return in glory, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy reminds us of this about our life while here on earth:

Nevertheless, the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and objective of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord’s supper (10).

Everything that we do as members of Christ body flows from and back to this our “source and summit “in the Eucharistic celebration. The effects of receiving Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament in our lives are many: including increasing our union with the Lord; forgiving our venial sins; preserving us from grave sins; reinforcing the unity of the Church as the mystical body of Christ; and enabling our Christian initiation. Finally, in our worship of God at Mass, we are called, equipped and sent to be missionary disciples into the world!

A Message from Pope Francis: Words of Challenge and Hope

A selection from the Holy Father's homily on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), June 23, 2019

In the world, we are always trying to increase our profits, to raise our income. But why? Is it to give, or to have? To share or to accumulate? The “economy” of the Gospel multiplies through sharing, nourishes through distributing. It does not sate the greed of a few, but gives life to the world (cf. Jn 6:33). The verb Jesus uses is not to have but to give.



He tells his disciples straight out:

“You give them something to eat”

(Lk 9:13). We can imagine the thoughts that went through their minds: “We don’t have enough bread for ourselves, and now we are supposed to think about others? Why do we have to give them something to eat, if they came to hear our Teacher? If they didn’t bring their own food, let them go back home, it’s their problem; or else give us some money to buy food”. This way of thinking is not wrong, but it isn’t the way Jesus thinks. He will have none of it: “You give them something to eat”.

Whatever we have can bear fruit if we give it away – that is what Jesus wants to tell us – and it does not matter whether it is great or small. The Lord does great things with our littleness, as he did with the five loaves. He does not work spectacular miracles or wave a magic wand; he works with simple things. God’s omnipotence is lowly, made up of love alone. And love can accomplish great things with little. The Eucharist teaches us this: for there we find God himself contained in a piece of bread. Simple, essential, bread broken and shared, the Eucharist we receive allows us to see things as God does. It inspires us to give ourselves to others. It is the antidote to the mindset that says: “Sorry, that is not my problem”, or: “I have no time, I can’t help you, it’s none of my business”. Or that looks the other way...

In our city that hungers for love and care, that suffers from decay and neglect, that contains so many elderly people living alone, families in difficulty, young people struggling to earn their bread and to realize their dreams, the Lord says to each one of you: “You yourself give them something to eat”. You may answer: “But I have so little; I am not up to such things”. That is not true; your “little” has great value in the eyes of Jesus, provided that you don’t keep it to yourself, but put it in play. Put yourself in play! You are not alone, for you have the Eucharist, bread for the journey, the bread of Jesus. Tonight too, we will be nourished

by his body given up for us. If we receive it into our hearts, this bread will release in us the power of love. We will feel blessed and loved, and we will want to bless and love in turn, beginning here, in our city, in the streets where we will process this evening. The Lord comes to our streets in order to speak a blessing for us and to give us courage. And he asks that we too be blessing and gift for others.

My Prayer for You

God our Father, it is through the perfect sacrifice of your Son that you offer to all abundance of new life in this present age. We pray that where we experience loss in the life of Grace, you would pour out upon our Archdiocese the saving gifts conveyed through the most holy Body and Blood of your Son. May His Eucharistic life consume us all and revive each of us into His one body and singular mission, welling up to eternal life. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

+ Charles C. Thompson