

Our Lady of Lourdes

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

June 6, 2010

Readings:

Genesis 14:18-20

1st Corinthians 11:23-26

Luke 9:11-17

Fr. Bob

As Catholics we believe that Jesus is really and personally present to us in the broken bread and shared cup of the Eucharist. And although we believe that Christ is present in the Scriptures, the assembly and the ministers of the Church, we hold that Christ's presence under the form of bread and wine is one filled with the greatest intimacy and uniqueness. The Eucharist is not intimate and unique because it is magic. It's not intimate and unique because we gaze upon the elements. The Eucharist is intimate and unique because earthly signs are transformed by God's love, and are consumed in faith. As we eat and drink these elements Christ becomes part of us, and we come alive in Christ.

In the fifth century Saint Augustine taught his people that if they truly loved the Eucharist they would become what they eat. The same is true for us today. By receiving into our hands the bread—blessed and broken, the cup—poured and shared, we say “Amen” to becoming the same in Christ: blessed, broken, poured out, and shared in love. We commune with God and God with us in the Eucharist so that just as earthly gifts are transformed into Christ so through us will be the entire world, and all things in it. There is a huge and important difference between grace and magic. One is a trick for show. The other is the power of love, which expresses itself in faith, hope, and service. As we know from Holy Thursday and from our Gospel today, there is a part of this transformation of ourselves that we should not miss. On Holy Thursday, we had the Gospel reading that told us of the action of Christ when he washed the feet of his disciples. In the action of a lowly servant, Jesus gave them a profound lesson about sharing in the meal.

And in our Gospel reading today, very much the same message. Christ was with the crowds in a deserted place and his disciples wanted to send them away since there was no food. He gave disciples a lesson again about his mission and it's tied into our feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. He blessed the food that they had and handed it back to the disciples to distribute it. And we know the end of the story. There was more than enough left over to fill twelve baskets. When we gather for the Eucharist and say ‘Amen’ when we receive, we are also committing ourselves to the lessons he gave the disciples. This Eucharist is not just personal. It's not just about our own transformation. Again, it should be for us, food for the journey. Something we take beyond this place, and share with our world. In the view of Jesus, faith is never meant to be only about our own salvation but also, how we bring salvation and bring the good news to the lives we touch. We are not worthy of the gift, until we look beyond it and see the world we live in, and the world that we are called to serve, just as Christ, the servant, washed the feet of his disciples and just as Christ fed over five thousand by handing the food to his disciples to share.