

Notes from the Liturgist...

## The Great Souvenir from Jesus

### (Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ)

When two or more friends expect that they will be separated from each other for a long time, they often give a special gift or “*souvenir*” to each other. The souvenir will remind them of their good relationship or friendship. We always do this gesture because the souvenir reminds them their intimate connection to the giver. Sometimes the receiver shares to another person the souvenir; other times they entrust the souvenir to someone for a special care if they can no longer take care of it in order to preserve that it and the memory of the giver.

Today we celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi. In liturgical language, we are celebrating the Solemnity of the real presence of the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Son of God, Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Jesus performed a miracle, gave a great gift, a souvenir to humanity in order for us to remember Him always. When Jesus was about to die on the Cross, he wanted to remain present forever. Thus, two months earlier, we commemorate the Institution of the Holy Eucharist, that was during Holy Thursday. Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist not for Himself but for His loved ones, the humanity. During the Last Supper, Jesus used his divine power as Lord and King of the universe. He transformed the bread and wine into his own substance, into his own flesh and blood. Then, he broke it and shared to his disciples for them to eat and drink. At that moment Jesus was present to them in two ways: in His biological body and in the transformed bread and wine (into His body and blood). Thus, Jesus was present to his loved ones by being with them face to face, as a table companion seated a few feet away and also by being inside them after they had partaken of the transformed Bread and Wine (Body and Blood of Christ).

Moreover, Jesus gave to his disciples the power to do the same thing he had done, to make him present by transforming bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. Thus, they would be able to share his presence everywhere and for all times after his departure to Heaven. For by the words: “Do this in memory of me” (Lk. 22, 19), such was accomplished. “Jesus included the apostles in his own offering and bids them perpetuate it” (CCC. 611), and the apostles passed that same power to their successors, to the ordained priests, so that the souvenir from Jesus will be shared to all humanity.

Today, let us celebrate with a joyful heart the great souvenir that Jesus left us before he went back to the Father. It is more than a lifeless souvenir. He is true, substantially, really present under the appearance of Bread and Wine that we see in Holy Eucharist. Because of that, we have the privilege to invite him into our hearts daily if we receive the Holy Communion and or we go for spiritual communion by visiting Him often in the Blessed Sacrament. This endless presence of Jesus under the appearance of the Bread and Wine is the tremendous treasure of the Catholic Church. Thus, the adoration chapels and churches are not simply buildings, but they are sacred spaces where we can meet our Lord our Savior. May the Body and Blood of Christ bring us to everlasting life.