

Body & Blood of Christ

Every week, week after week, we do the same thing. We gather in this place to hear God's Word and to share in the Eucharist. Because we do this every week, what we do can become routine and tedious; yes, even boring. And so it is important on this day, when we celebrate this feast of the Holy Body and Blood of Christ, to remind ourselves why we are here. What we are doing. Why we assemble week after week, year after year.

Why we are here. The simplest answer is this. We are here to hear God's Word and to be nourished with the very body and blood Christ. *First* we listen to *God's Word: God's Word*, not a human word, not my words, but *God's Word*. I understand that the scriptural readings can be difficult to understand. But the Word we hear in them is *God's Word*: a Word that has the power to change and transform our lives, if we allow that Word to penetrate our hearts.

Second, we are here to be nourished by the very body and blood of Christ. The Eucharist we receive is not merely a symbol; it is the very body and blood of Christ. Every time we receive this Eucharist, Christ enters our life and we enter into the life of Christ. Every time we receive the Eucharist, we are changed and transformed into Christ. Every time we receive the Eucharist, we become the body of Christ, the Church.

This mystery is so great that I need to remind myself of it again and again. When I consecrate the bread and say, “This is my body,” and when I consecrate the wine and say, “This is my blood,” I need to remind myself of what the Spirit of God is doing in this Eucharist. When I give communion to you, and I say, “The Body of Christ, the Blood of Christ,” I need to remind myself of what I am giving. And when *you* respond “Amen,” you need to remind yourself what you are receiving. You need to remind yourself *who* is entering into your life.

What are we doing when we celebrate when we come to Mass week after week? We are entering into a great mystery that changes and transforms us week after week. If we listen and obey, the Word of God changes and transforms us, nourishes and feeds us, so that we become what we hear. And if we receive the Body and the Blood of Christ with faith, aware that we are in the presence of the risen Lord, we are nourished, changed, and transformed. We become what we consume; we become the Body of Christ.

I know it can be tedious and to be here week after week. I know how boring I must sound week after week. I have seen the ribbons in the hymnals twisted into beads because someone was bored with my words. That is why we need to remind ourselves what we are doing, and why we are here. We are here to be nourished by *God's* Word and to be fed by *Christ's* body and blood. Is there anything more important?