

Angelus Address on Feast of Corpus Christi

Address given by Pope Francis before praying the Angelus on the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

06/19/2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Celebrated in Italy and in many other countries this Sunday is the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ – the Latin name is often used: *Corpus*

Domini or *Corpus Christi*. Every Sunday the ecclesial community gathers around the Eucharist, the Sacrament instituted by Jesus in the Last Supper. However, every year we have the joy of celebrating the feast dedicated to this central mystery of the faith, to express in fullness our adoration of Christ, who gives Himself as food and drink of salvation.

Today's gospel page, written by Saint John, is part of the discourse on the "*bread of life*" (cf. 6:51-58). Jesus affirms: "I am the bread which came down from Heaven . . . and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (v. 51). He wishes to say that the Father has sent him to the world as food of eternal life and, therefore, He will sacrifice Himself, His flesh. In fact on the cross Jesus gave His Body and shed His Blood. The crucified Son of Man is the true paschal Lamb, who frees us from the

slavery of sin and sustains us on the way to the Promised Land. The Eucharist is the Sacrament of His Flesh given to make the world live; whoever eats this food remains in Jesus and lives for Him. To assimilate Jesus means to be in Him, to become children in the Son.

As He did with the disciples of Emmaus, in the Eucharist Jesus comes beside us, pilgrims in history, to nourish faith, hope and charity in us; to comfort us in trials; to support us in the commitment for justice and peace. This supportive presence of the Son of God is everywhere: in the cities, in the countryside, in the North and in the South of the world, in countries of Christian tradition and in those of first evangelization. And, in the Eucharist, He offers Himself as spiritual strength to help us put His commandment into practice – to love one another as He has loved us – building hospitable

communities open to the needs of all, especially of the most frail, poor and needy persons.

To be nourished by Jesus-Eucharist also means to abandon ourselves with trust to Him and to allow ourselves to be guided by Him. It is about putting Jesus in the place of our “I.” Thus the free love received from Jesus in Eucharistic Communion, through the action of the Holy Spirit nourishes our love for God and for the brothers and sisters we encounter on our path every day. Nourished by Christ’s Body, we become ever more and concretely the Mystical Body of Christ. The Apostle Paul reminds us of this: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the Body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one Body, for

we all partake of the one bread" (*1 Corinthians 10:16-17*).

May the Virgin Mary, who was always united to Jesus, Bread of life, help us to rediscover the beauty of the Eucharist, to nourish us with faith to live in communion with God and with our brothers and sisters.

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