

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
Corpus Christi
June 11, 2023
Year of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ark of the New Covenant

“It is this real presence of God which makes Catholicism a religion quite distinct from any other form of Christianity.”
(Rev. Frederick William Faber, D.D., The Blessed Sacrament, p. 23)

In his masterful work on the Eucharist, Fr. Frederick Faber offered a line of thought which I intend to make the focal point of our reflection upon the Blessed Sacrament. He writes: *“Sacred things and sacred ceremonies, simply because they are things and ceremonies, may become common to us, though they ought not to do so. They may cease to make an impression, and it may be difficult for us always to be recollected in their presence, without this difficulty being a symptom of any very grave spiritual disease.”* (The Blessed Sacrament, p. 46). My family, I ask you, is it because we so often stand here, in the shadow of the tabernacle housing the presence of Almighty God, that we are no longer moved to a profound sense of humility?

Persons have made fortunes offering the latest and greatest. This holds true in so many areas of our daily lives. It also can be seen in religion. It seems almost every day, a new prayer book is written, a new “praise” song is recorded, a new approach to youth ministry is tried. Where once Christians quietly walked into a church to pray, now in many places, you must first pass through the coffee bar and gift shop before you can enter into the sanctuary. Yet even in our fickleness, God still pursues us; beckoning us to humbly return home to Him. And as Catholics, we do not have that far to travel to be with Him. All we have to do is go to our parish church, on any day of the week, and sit in His Presence. Truly, how much easier could God make it?

Think of it in this fashion, God desires each of us to be with Him now and remain with Him for eternity. He chose to prove this deep love to us. Imagine, if you will, the many ways He does this. I will offer four for your consideration. First, God stooped down from Heaven to involve Himself in our existence. God, the creator of all things, chooses to experience life as one of us. Some might go so far as to profess that in His love for us, He had already considered and consented to the Cross of Calvary even before He created anything spiritual or material. Secondly, by coming in our flesh, Jesus chose to elevate our flesh when He ascended into Heaven. God, by this loving act, lifts up humanity to a reality superior to the angels. And yes, I did say superior to the angels. Why? Name one angel who can receive God completely, totally, as we do, every time we receive the Eucharist in a state of Grace? Thirdly, because He knows we make mistakes, God chooses to make Himself completely present in every part of the host once blessed. So, if a priest miscounts the number of people at a Mass and has to begin “breaking” the Eucharist into smaller and

smaller pieces, God is fully present in each piece. You do not get more Jesus in a larger piece of the Blessed Sacrament. Fourth and finally, God chooses to be fully present in every host in every part of the world a Catholic Mass is prayed. Again, imagine the millions of people who attend the Mass anywhere in the world and receive the Blessed Sacrament. Each person receives God into themselves fully and completely. And Jesus does not come alone—all of the Trinity is present each time a person receives communion, even the smallest piece of the Eucharist in the most remote corner of our planet. These four proofs of His love are miracles we can experience every time we attend a Catholic Mass. And so, I ask, why are we not taking full advantage of this? Seriously, why are we not moved by this?

It is my desire to spend most of next year exploring our beliefs concerning the Real Presence of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ fully present in the Eucharist. This will coincide with the desire of the Bishops of our United States to hold a Eucharistic Congress which, we all pray, will help Catholics to accept the Catholic Church's teachings on the Real Presence of Jesus and, again we pray, stir into flame the smoldering embers of our love for God and all the ways He chose to prove His love for us. May the efforts of our parishes be blessed with a deeper awareness of whose Presence we are currently in and inspire us to respond in a way befitting this reality.