

Holy Rosary Parish

Westmount, NS

The Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)

(Reflection by Fr. Douglas Murphy)

“When are we going to get back to Church?” “I miss Mass so much.” I hear those comment all the time. The feast of Corpus Christi this weekend focuses on what indeed we have been missing as we have fasted from the Eucharist these many weeks.

In the passage of John's Gospel chosen for this feast day, the words of Jesus are quoted: Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in them.

St. John Chrysostom asked: "What is the Bread actually?" The Body of Christ. What do the communicants become? The Body of Christ. Just as the bread comes from many grains, which remain themselves and are not distinguished from one another because they are united, so we are united with Christ."

The Eucharist is Christ's gift to us. It is, as the Church has taught us, in the Document on the Liturgy from the Vatican Council, the source and summit of our life as church. Although we will not be able to celebrate Mass this weekend let us be grateful for Christ's presence in the Eucharist as we wait and long to be fed once again with the Body and Blood of Jesus.



St. Justin, second century martyr, describes his experience of the celebration of the Eucharist: On Sunday we have a common assembly of all members , whether they live in the city or in the country districts. The recollections of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as there is time. When the reader has finished, the president of the assembly speaks to us ; he urges everyone to imitate the examples of virtue we have heard in the readings. Then we all stand up together and pray. On the conclusion of our prayer, bread and wine are brought forward. The president offers prayers and give thanks to the best of his ability, and the people give assent by saying, "Amen." The eucharist is distributed, everyone present communicates and the deacons take it to those who are absent. The wealthy, if they wish, may make a contribution, and they themselves decide the amount. The collection is placed in the custody of the president, who uses it to help the orphans and the widows and all who are for any reason in distress, whether because they are sick, in prison, or away from home. In a word, he takes care of all who are in need.

We hold our common assembly on Sunday because it is the first day of the week, the day on which God put darkness and chaos to flight and created the world, and because on that same day our Savior Jesus Christ rose from the dead. For he was crucified on Friday and on Sunday he

appeared to his apostles and disciples and taught them the things that we have passed on for your consideration.

We, today, ritualize the Eucharist as Justin described it in the 2nd century. Our faith in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist is based on the promise of Christ found in John's Gospel, chapter 6, quoted above, he has given us his Body and Blood for our food and drink. In the Eucharist we meet Jesus, the Risen Lord who comes to us under the appearance of bread and wine to nourish and strengthen us for our journey through life. Jesus gives us his own Body, broken for us on the cross and his precious Blood poured out for us, in order that our sins may be forgiven and we would live as his disciples.

During these days when we have been forced to fast from the Eucharist, it is my prayer that our appreciation for the Lord's gift and love for us expressed in the Body and Blood of his Son, will increase. In the meanwhile let us remember that we still called to be eucharist for one another.

