

**Homily for the Solemnity of *Corpus Christi*, Year C 19-06-2022 by Fr. Lubem Waya, osj**

**First Reading: Genesis 14:18-20**

**Psalm: Psalm 110**

**Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

**Gospel: Luke 9:11-17**

### **WHY DO WE CELEBRATE *CORPUS CHRISTI*?**

The solemnity we celebrate today is known as *Corpus Christi*. *Corpus Christi* literally means the body of Christ. And symbolically, a living body also contains blood, and we are referring to the body of the living Christ. Therefore, the feast today is a commemoration of not just the body of Christ but also the blood of Christ. That is the body and blood of Christ together with His soul and divinity under the appearance of bread and wine. Hence, properly speaking, this feast can be said to be a Eucharistic feast. And since the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Church's life and ministry, it means also that this feast is special not only in solemnity but also, and most importantly in its significance. Because the Eucharist makes the Church, the Church cannot exist without the Eucharist. It can therefore only be in God's plan to found His Church on the Eucharist. That is why we see the mysterious priest and king of Salem, Melchizedek in the first reading, offering bread and wine in thanksgiving to God, while pronouncing the words of blessing over Abraham. Abraham in gratitude gave him a tithe of everything. This short episode therefore foreshadows the Eucharist, the priesthood and the Church of God to which we are called to be members. What kind of a member am I?

It is understood that the priesthood of Melchizedek is a pointer to the priesthood of Christ. Christ is a priest not in the line of Aaron, but in the line of Melchizedek since His priesthood is everlasting. This is truly the priesthood of Christ which is superior to the priesthood of the Old Law. As such, anyone ordained to the priesthood of Christ is a priest forever like Melchizedek of old who had no beginning nor end as attested by the psalmist today. The priest is ordained to celebrate the Word and the Eucharist for the people of God. So, there is also an unbroken bond between the priesthood and the Eucharist. Little wonder then that in the gospel reading we have an open air 'eucharistic celebration' where Christ feeds more than five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. They all ate to their fill and the scraps collected were superfluous and filled twelve baskets.

How come just five loaves and two fish became more than sufficient for all? It was because of the generosity of spirit of the disciples. Christ uses this to teach us that we can always achieve more and greater success when we share with those in need, no matter how little we have. And as long as we are ready to share the little we have received from God with those in need, everything in the end becomes sufficient for us all. This is the real Eucharistic miracle that God works in our lives not only on the altar but also in our daily ordinary lives. How charitable are you with the blessings you have received from God?

The Eucharist humbles us to recognize that whatever we have is not by our own merits but by God's grace who bestows them on us, so that we can help others. The little bread and wine brought and offered on the altar of sacrifice turn into the body and blood of Christ when the prayer of blessing is said over them. God is interested in the genuineness of our efforts, generosity of heart, and sincerity of purpose. When He sees all of these, He Himself comes to our aid to complete the good we are set out to accomplish. This is why ordinary bread and wine can become the true body and blood of Christ. And St. Paul reminds us that this is not an ordinary meal. We must come to it fully prepared to give God our best since He has first given us His best in the forms of bread and wine, such that to have the Eucharist is to have Christ whole and entire. This is the greatest gift of Christ to us, the gift of Himself. By receiving Him, may we also become what we eat, broken and shared for the good of all. Amen.