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Homily at Mass Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Year C – 23 June 2019

Easter Sunday. Pentecost. Trinity Sunday. And today perhaps the most beautiful and festive day of all of them – the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. In Latin Corpus Christi. In French La Fete Dieu – the feast of God. Today is a distinctly Catholic feast – we celebrate and honour the greatest gift God gave us: the gift of his Son, the Holy Eucharist. It is a gift each of us cherishes; it draws us to the church each Sunday. A gift that we celebrate at the Altar. The sacrifice of Christ we offer. The gift of God before whom we kneel in adoration. A gift that we receive with humility and joy, with hands cupped like a throne to receive the King of Kings, or we receive meekly, like small children, on the tongue. The Eucharist is Christ – truly present amongst us, veiled in signs of bread and wine, remaining with us in the tabernacles of our churches. Jesus in the Eucharist is Emmanuel – God with us.

St Paul recalls for us the day when Jesus first gave us this gift. It was the night of the Passover, the annual feast of the Jews, still celebrated today in their homes, as they recall all that God did to rescue their ancestors from the dark night of slavery in Egypt. As we celebrate the Eucharist each Sunday we recall the great victory of Christ, all that God has done for us by Christ's saving death and resurrection. For us Sunday is the Lord's Day: the day Christ has made holy by his resurrection from the dead. Every other day of the week is taken up with work, university, school, sport, shopping, the rat race. But Sunday stands out – a day free from work and toil, a day for God, for the family, for a break, for a rest, for recreation, perhaps a bit of reading or hobbies, a day that puts life into perspective: Jesus calls it a day "made for man". Sunday breathes a sweet perfume into our lives that sustains us for the week ahead.

"Then Jesus took some bread ... in the same way he took the cup ..." what Jesus said, what Jesus did is very familiar to us – we hear this story recalled, we see it enacted before our eyes each time we come to the church for Mass. The Mass is a great prayer – the greatest prayer of all because it is offered by Christ – his arms outstretched on the Cross. The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist form together one great act of worship. God speaks to us, he forms us, he teaches us as the Word of God is proclaimed and preached. God's Word forms our faith and strengthens it: that is why we make the Profession of Faith each Sunday. God's Word opens our hearts and calls us to embrace the whole world and all its needs. That is why we make our prayers of petition and intercession each Sunday. God's Word leads us to the Altar, where Christ joins us – Head and members – in one Body, one people, one family in the Eucharist we celebrate and receive. You and I accept this in one great 'yes' to God: our Amen in the moment of Holy Communion.

Pope Francis has told priests to pull up their socks when it comes to preaching the Word of God. Pope Benedict reminded priests to always aim for their best in what he called the *ars celebrandi*: the way they celebrate Mass, their attention to the prayers and actions, the beauty of the vestments and the sacred vessels, the great dignity that the worship of God deserves. On the feast of Corpus Christi all of us can think about our attitude towards the Eucharist and our weekly Sunday Mass. Today's Bulletin includes some paragraphs from YOUCAT, the catechism for young Catholics, on the Church's faith in the Eucharist, our attitude and demeanor, our prayer of adoration and thanksgiving.

- How do I honour Sunday, the Lord's Day?
- Am I able to arrive on time for Mass, or even a bit early, so that I am ready, settled, focused, at peace for this hour of prayer and worship?
- Do I remember to keep the Eucharistic fast: one hour without food and drink, to prepare my soul for the Bread of Angels, the Living Bread come down from Heaven?
- Do I enter the Church with a genuflection well made, a true act of adoration?
- Do I receive Holy Communion with faith. If I receive Holy Communion on the hand, are my hands clean, unencumbered by keys, handkerchiefs, tissues?
- Do I present my hands as a throne for the King of Kings?
- Do I receive Holy Communion on the tongue, at least from time to time?
- Do I spend some time in silence, thanksgiving, adoration after Holy Communion?
- What is my prayer to Jesus?
- How often do I say "Lord Jesus thank you", "Lord Jesus, I love you", "Lord Jesus stay with me always"
- Do I stay for the whole celebration of Mass?
- Is my life so busy, so full, so distracted that I can't give 1 hour to God?

One of the psalms asks "How can I repay the Lord for all he has given to me?" (Psalm 115)