

Corpus Christi

Today the Catholic Church celebrated one of the greatest feasts of the year--the Feast of Corpus Christi, which means "the Body of Christ." The purpose of this feast is to praise and to thank Our Divine Lord for the sublime gift of the Holy Eucharist. It is true, on Holy Thursday we commemorate the anniversary of the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, and pass some time in adoring Our Lord, solemnly enthroned in the repository from the conclusion of the Mass until the Ceremonies on Good Friday. But the spirit of sorrow and sadness that prevails in Holy Week does not permit us to feel and to express the great joy that arises in our hearts when we realise our privilege of having Christ Himself as our intimate Friend.

Hence, since the thirteenth century the Church has been celebrating Corpus Christi on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, as a day of gladness and rejoicing. The full liturgical service of this day calls for a procession of the Blessed Sacrament, and in Catholic lands this procession winds its way through the gaily decorated streets of the cities.

Every practical Catholic rejoices in meditating on the Blessed Sacrament. When, as children we were preparing for our First Communion, we looked forward eagerly and longingly to the moment when Our Lord would enter our soul. How careful we were to make a most exact and fervent confession, so that our hearts would be perfectly pure for the coming of our Divine Guest. And when Our Blessed Saviour did come into our heart, we experienced a joy that we had never known before, and we promised Our Blessed Lord that we would be faithful to Him all the days of our lives.

Perhaps with the passing of time we have not lived up to that promise, and have even grown cold in our devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Perhaps we seldom receive Holy Communion and never think of making a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Today gives us an opportunity to renew our faith and love for Our Divine Lord, truly present on the altar.

Sunday's Gospel tells us of the king who made a great marriage feast and sent out many invitations, but received a curt refusal from many of those invited. So, too, many Catholics refuse the invitation of Jesus Christ to partake of the banquet of His Body and Blood.

Practical Application

Thank Our Lord most profoundly for the great gift of the Blessed Sacrament. Promise that you will try to make the Blessed Sacrament the very centre of your life by frequently receiving Holy Communion.