



John 6:51-58

51 Jesus said to the Jews: ‘I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.’ 52 Then the Jews started arguing with one another: ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’ they said. 53 Jesus replied: ‘I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you. 54 Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him. 57 As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will draw life from me. 58 This is the bread come down from

heaven; not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.’

Other readings: Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14-16 Psalm 147 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord, which we know also as Corpus Christi, provides a special occasion to consider the gift of the Holy Eucharist, the gift given by Christ to the Church on the night before he died.

The gospel is taken from chapter 6 of the Fourth Gospel, a lengthy chapter which presents the multiplication of the loaves and the walking on the water, followed by the words of Jesus and interventions of the Jews concerning the meaning of the first of these two signs. The verses in today’s reading come towards the end of the chapter, when the words of Jesus clearly focus on the Eucharist.

In the Eucharist we receive repeatedly the once-and-for-all gift of the Bread of Life. As Jesus implies, it is unlike anything which preceded it, unlike ‘the bread our ancestors ate’. This bread is the pledge of God’s gift of life, and is best understood in the context of the paschal mystery, the death of Christ and his self-giving to lead us to life.

Perhaps this feast may also be an occasion for us to question ourselves about the reverence we show to the Eucharist. The Church encourages us to prepare by prayer to receive both Word and Sacrament, to observe a one-hour fast before Communion (except for those who are infirm), to approach the table of the Lord reverently, to spend time in giving thanks for this extraordinary sacrament, and to show a particular respect and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament reserved in our churches.

How can you avoid receiving the Lord in a routine manner?

What can you do to increase your reverence for the Blessed Sacrament?

Pray that we will allow the reception of the Eucharist to transform our lives.

Pray for fidelity to our Sunday Mass obligation, that all may be strengthened in communion.