

Father O'Connor's Homily for 7 June 2026
The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ-A
Corpus Christi

Deuteronomy 8: 2-3, 14b-16a
1 Corinthians 10: 16-17
John 6: 51-58

I was ordained a priest 51 years ago next Sunday, 14 June. And I celebrate 11 of those years being with you here at Saint Joseph and Nativity Parishes.

Jesus gave us the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the Priesthood, so that we could continue to do what He did at the Last Supper: to celebrate the Eucharist. "Do this in memory of Me," He said. And we continue to do what He told us to do.

During Mass what happens to bread and wine runs counter to what our senses tell us. After the words of consecration – "This is My Body. This is My Blood" – they appear to be the same as they were before. But our faith tells us that they are now substantially changed. What – or Who – is before us is none other than Jesus Christ Himself, with His Body and Blood, His soul and divinity.

At the beginning of creation, the Book of Genesis tells us, the Eternal Word of God spoke and said: "Let there be light." And there was light.

At the Last Supper, Jesus, the Eternal Word of God made flesh, said: "This is My Body. This is My Blood. Take and eat. Take and drink. Do this in Memory of Me."

Jesus, the Word of God, assures us that the Eucharist, the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Communion is really what He declares: it is truly Himself.

Mary carried the Infant Jesus in her womb for nine months before He was born in Bethlehem. She was a living tabernacle, a sanctuary of His presence.

We carry Him in our bodies when we receive Him in Holy Communion. We too are a living tabernacle, a sanctuary of His presence.

Jesus instructs us in today's Gospel: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" [John 6: 51].

And Saint Paul teaches us in the Second Reading today: “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the Blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the Body of Christ?” [1 Corinthians 10: 16]. Paul means what he says: the Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of Jesus. In the Eucharist we are one with Christ and one with each other in Him.

The refrain from the hymn, “Sanctuary,” prays:

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
Pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I’ll be a living
Sanctuary for You.

When did you receive Jesus in the Eucharist for the very first time? I made my First Holy Communion on 5 May 1957 in Saint Peter’s Church in Huron. I remember so well that day and the preparation that led to it.

How many times have you and I received Jesus in Holy Communion as of today? I have no idea. But the temptation that we can face is to treat the Mass as “routine.” Routine can be a very good thing when it helps us establish good habits or virtues. But it can also lead to “just going through the motions” – even in celebrating Mass and receiving the Eucharist.

This Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Corpus Christi, can help us to re-ignite our appreciation for Jesus’ gift to us of Himself.

One author wrote: “The words of creation – ‘Let there be light’ – are not greater than the words of the consecration – ‘This is My Body. This is My Blood’ – that bring to us our Creator.”

Saint John Vianney said: “An entire lifetime would not be enough to thank God for one reception of Holy Communion.”

As Saint Carlo Acutis said, “The Eucharist is my highway to heaven.” And, by the gift of Jesus Himself, the Eucharist is our “highway to heaven” too.

“Sanctuary” says it so well:

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
Pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I’ll be a living
Sanctuary for you.

This really puts us in the right frame of mind today for this Feast of Corpus Christi, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, the feast of the Eucharist.

With thanksgiving, I'll be a living
Sanctuary for you.