



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

The Solemnity of Corpus Christi (The Body & Blood of Christ)

I have searched for you and you have found me

Readings: Deuteronomy 8: 2-3, 4-16, Ps 147, 1 Corinthians 10: 16-17, John 6: 51-58

In a couple of hours the children of this parish, who have been long preparing, will be admitted to the sacrament of Holy Communion. It is a day of great celebration for the parish and, entirely appropriate that it should be on the Sunday nearest Corpus Christi, that great feast of the Mystery of the Real Presence.

They will, we hope, have learnt much from their lessons and their catechists. Whether they have retained much time alone will tell but we can help them in that. Their primary catechists will have been their parents. Do they take the Faith seriously? Are they regular? Are they joyful in their living out of the Gospel? Do they conform their lives to the teachings and example of Jesus? Like so much of parenting, this is a very tall order. So we too can and must help in that catechising and, in helping them, we can help one another.

What can we do?

For most of us it is a very long time since our own catechising and we have put many miles on the theological clock since our last major refuelling stop.

But, as Pope St. John Paul the Great reminded us often, we never stop needing to be catechised. We never end the process of learning about and loving God and going deeper into His Presence. One of the last things that great saint is recorded as saying is: 'I have searched for you and you have found me and I thank you.' It is a beautiful summary of our earthly pilgrimage.

That need for constant and consistent catechisation was underlined recently in Bishop Mark's booklet on the key signs of an evangelising parish. One of those signs was continuing adult formation. We do not stop at our first communion or our confirmation.

Thus we look to help our children grow, the latest admissions to the summit and source of our Faith. But we also look to grow ourselves, to mature in Christ, and help one another along the Way.

This morning I do not want to dwell on heavy education programmes but on the simplest things we can do when we come to Mass, things that will take us deeper and point the way for one another.

One of the things I love about our parish church is that, when you enter on a Sunday, there is a small dedicated group praying the Rosary before the Blessed Sacrament. This simple and powerful devotion and witness sets the tone of attention and preparation for us all. It is all too easy for us to arrive at church and distract one another but simple devotional practice rather attracts us to our central task, the adoration of and encounter with Jesus. That cultivation of attention begins before we arrive at church. It is good to have read the readings for the day, to prepare ourselves to give God this precious hour to speak to us. We are, after all, not an audience but a

congregation. We do not come to be entertained but to be swept up into the worship of Heaven. That requires the active preparation and participation of the mind and the soul. So we attend, we are present, and we attend, we pay absolute attention. A priest can tell as he walks in the entrance procession whether a congregation is ready to worship or whether it is going to be like 'kicking treacle' – heavy going.

The next part of our teaching and learning by example is the expression of joy. Whatever the state of our personal happiness or misery the Christian life, with its promise in the Risen Lord, of living eternally in the Presence, leads the heart to praise. It is why we begin with hymn or antiphon that lifts up our hearts for 'praise is fitting for loyal hearts'.

The Mass takes us the whole gamut of our emotions for we also face up, within it, to our sins and sorrows and failures. Our regularity at the Sacrament of Reconciliation, with its intensity of lived reality and glorious liberation, will inform our approach to the General Confession within the Mass and our gratitude for the prayers of Our Lay and the Saints of God. Would a visitor or a newly communicated child pick up on the tremendous seriousness and excitement of what we are involved in here? At the readings, do we listen to the WORD OF GOD? Are we anticipating that He will really speak to us through His Word and as the priest attempts to help us listen to the Word that is Jesus Himself?

And at the Consecration do we carry with us that sense of awe and love and devotion? (If Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was expected here today there would be nervousness, excitement, unbelievable preparation etc. etc. We are not expecting her BUT we are expecting the King of Kings, the Real

Presence of the Lord of Lords. How awesome is that? Would anybody guess that?)

Is there, about our worship, a sense of awe and glory and joyful encounter. Do we leave here closer to one another because we have come closer to God?

Are we, week by week, deepening that fellowship and friendship that enables us to serve Him more faithfully and to encourage and support one another more fully and to reach out to those who do not know or love Him more confidently?

These are the little things, but of great consequence, that we can offer ourselves and each other and our new communicants within the regular catechism of the Mass.

As Catholics we proclaim and believe in the Real Presence .

Do we worship in the full conviction of that truth?

We must worship as if Jesus was here because He is.

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