

## **Homily for the Feast of the Body & Blood of Christ**

Eddie Barclay died some ten years ago. I know. You are saying “Who was Eddie Barclay?” Don’t fret. I had no idea who he was until I read his obituary in the New York Times. So struck was I, that I saved it. Trust me...it wasn’t boring.

The following words jumped out at me. It read:

“He adored women, so much so that he married nine times. The age of each new wife varied in inverse proportion to Mr. Barclay’s own: at his most recent marriage, in 2002, he was 81, his bride was in her early 20’s. That marriage, as had the previous eight, ended in divorce.”

If that paragraph wasn’t enough, the entire obituary ended with this quote from Eddie himself:

“I’ve been in love with every one of my wives. They knew the rules. I would love with my heart, give them presents, take them on

holidays, give them the life they've read about in magazines. But I would never be physically faithful. If I met a woman I liked, if I wanted her, I would inevitably have to make love to her.”

It was a sad obituary. Eddie ended up being remembered as a person who was a taker and not a giver. Eddie lived selfishly. He actually hated women and used them accordingly. Instead of bringing life into the world, Eddie took life...bought life from everyone else.

Our remembrance of Jesus is very different from our remembrance of Eddie Barclay. How Jesus wanted to be remembered is given to us in today's Gospel. How He is remembered is what today's feast is all about. Jesus was to be remembered in bread and wine that becomes His Body and Blood.

What we do here every Sunday and every time we celebrate Mass is no passive reminder of God's love. Every time we come together we come to participate and enter into the living reality of God's love and presence in the Church and in our lives.

The events of Christ's life do not belong to yesterday: they belong to today! And tomorrow! And forever! This Eucharist that we come forward to receive is not a re-enactment of something that took place centuries ago. This is a real encounter with the living God who comes into our lives in this sacrament.

The Eucharist that we receive is not a symbol of Christ. It is not a sign of Christ. It is not a remembrance of Christ. IT IS CHRIST. It is His Body. It is His Blood. It is His own life that enters our bodies and flows through our veins and into our hearts. It is the most profound gift of love bidding us to love others as God loved us first. As St. Augustine taught: it is an invitation "to become what we receive." And once we become that gift of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, the question before us is how do we bring Christ to others once we leave the doors of our parish Church?