

Homily for the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ

What a challenging Gospel! Look at it carefully.

For days Jesus and His disciples have been followed relentlessly by a countless number of people who never seem to be satisfied.

The end of the day fast approaches and there is little to eat. Panicked at the prospect of feeding so many with almost nothing, the disciples urge Jesus to “send them away.” But Jesus is quick to react: “Give them something to eat yourselves.”

The disciples panic... “We have so very little.” Jesus doesn’t back down. Instead, He invites them to bring Him whatever they have. And the rest of the story is the miracle of feeding so many with so little...feeding them to abundance.

This is a powerful but challenging story. Challenging because that Gospel story is happening over and over again in our world today. People are searching for Christ. People are searching for the compassion of God. People are searching for help. And these people are looking at us, the disciples of Christ in today’s world, for that help. We often have the same attitude as the disciples. We want Christ to “send them away.”

“Let them be someone else’s problem.” “They are intruding in my life.”
“I’ve done enough. Let someone else solve the problem.”

We know these pestering people by many names. They are the homeless who clutter our streets and stand at intersections with signs asking for help. They are immigrants, both legal and illegal, who seek safety and an opportunity to make a better life for themselves. They are the elderly who populate our nursing homes and who are forgotten because it is so difficult to go to see them. They are the victims of floods and storms and tornadoes. A boundless litany of people cry out for our help.

And beyond those individuals who haunt the corridors of our wider societal lives, what about those individuals we find in the corridors of our individual lives? Relatives we don’t visit, children from whom we are estranged, people we refuse to forgive...the list is known only to ourselves...but it is real.

We celebrate today the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. We celebrate the gift of the Eucharist that we receive every time we come to Mass.

When we come to receive this great gift...this gift of Christ who comes to us in bread and wine...we should think very carefully about what we are doing. It isn’t a casual act. It is coming to Christ in order to

receive Christ. It is coming to Christ in order to become Christ. It is bringing to Christ all that we are in order that He might take what little we have and produce within each of us an abundance...an abundance of care and concern, an abundance of understanding, an abundance of energy to feed the hungers of those who are starving for food, for love, and for compassion. Christ is saying to all of us: "Trust Me with what you have and I will increase it a thousand-fold so that you might bring to others the gift I have given to you...the gift of my Body and Blood made real in the simple gifts of bread and wine."