

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
June 3, 2018

In order to better appreciate what we celebrate today in the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ let us first ask some questions about our own body. Why would God create us in this way in the first place? There are so many limitations we have because of our body. Because of our body, we get old, we get sick, hungry, and we spend a lot of time and energy taking care of these issues. Besides that, we are confined to one space and we almost all the time want to be where we are not. (I do not want to aid and abet your temptations to be distracted. I know you are trying very hard to pay attention to this sermon but I also know that your mind wanders and you start thinking about what you are going to do today after Mass. Maybe you're dreaming about being in a boat on the lake, someplace other than church.) And then there are issues of being fat, or skinny or too tall or too short or of losing all of my hair. I cannot tell if these priest vestments help or not. Do I look fat in these? Marge would be honest and say yes.

And what about the exploitation of the body such as pornography or slavery? Why have a body at all? Why didn't God create us like the angels and then we would all be happy and have no problems.

But in spite of all of this, God made us the way we are, body and soul, in His image and likeness. Our body, no matter how 'in shape' we are or how decrepit, our body is beautiful and wondrously complex. We saw Deacon Mark's newborn grandson the other day. How awesome.

Nevertheless, St. Theresa of Avila says, 'there is nothing more excellent and with greater dignity than the human soul.' In all the immensity of creation, it is the human soul that is the most noble.' But then, she says, 'if the angels could envy, they would envy us because of our ability to suffer.' How off the wall is that? What kind of macabre or masochistic thinking is this? Who wants to suffer?

Only human beings with our body are capable of sacrifice and when we sacrifice, it is the greatest sign of love. Love is not that self-satisfying comfort zone where the couple lives in some sort of ethereal bliss. No, love is giving up what we want for

the well-being of the one we love. Love, at its essence, is sacrifice. And sacrifice is suffering.

So here we are, on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. God did not only give us a body, but took upon Himself, his own human body so that He could bond with us like no angel could ever be bonded to God. It's all about love. Not some wishy-washy, titillating, fickle feeling that comes and goes as the wind. It's all about love, real love, sacrificial love, committed, visceral, carnal love with all of its joys and suffering and pain.

Today we celebrate all the messy and complicated dynamics of our Lord and God taking on a human body. The consequences of the incarnation of God cut to the marrow of our bones and the innermost reaches of our soul. That God would go through all of that for us is as awesome and amazing as creation itself. And, besides that, He gives us the Eucharist which is the physical presence of God. It is given to us to eat, so that the body of God be a part of our body. Blood sisters and brothers, as it were, with God. That is why we are here and not out on the lake or at the Casino or at a waterpark. We are here to receive the Eucharist, the body and blood of God.

An easy way to celebrate the immensity of God is to look at the stars at night. They say that there are about 5000 stars visible at night and earth gets in the way of half of them in order to see them all at once. There are over 100 billion stars in our galaxy, and now we find that there are millions of galaxies. I look forward to the launch of the Webb telescope which will replace the Hubble. The Hubble can see 13 billion light years out, the Webb will look way beyond that. We have only scratched the surface.

In the middle of all of that is our carnal God. The incarnation punctuates the act of creation itself. In the beginning, God created the universe, God created you and me, and He said that it was good.