

*A Note from the Pastor*

Fr. Jerry Simonelli

Dear Friends:

Today we celebrate the Feast of *Corpus Christi* – The Body and Blood of Christ. The Feast of *Corpus Christi*, goes back to the 13th century, but it celebrates something far older: the institution of the [Sacrament of Holy Communion](#) at the Last Supper. While [Holy Thursday](#) is also a celebration of this mystery, the solemn nature of Holy Week, and the focus on Christ's Passion on [Good Friday](#), overshadows that aspect of Holy Thursday.

Thus, in 1246, Bishop Robert de Thorete of the Belgina diocese of Liège, at the suggestion of St. Juliana of Mont Cornillon (also in Belgium), convened a synod and instituted the celebration of the feast. From Liège, the celebration began to spread, and, (continued on page 3)

on September 8, 1264, Pope Urban IV issued the papal bull "Transiturus," which established the Feast of Corpus Christi as a universal feast of the Church, to be celebrated on the Thursday following [Trinity Sunday](#). In the Dioceses of the United States, the celebration is moved to the Sunday following Trinity Sunday.

At the request of Pope Urban IV, St. Thomas Aquinas composed the office (the official prayers of the Church) for the feast. This office is widely considered one of the most beautiful in the traditional Roman Breviary (the official prayer book of the Divine Office or Liturgy of the Hours), and it is the source of the famous Eucharistic hymns "[Pange Lingua Gloriosi](#)" and "[Tantum Ergo Sacramentum](#)."

For centuries after the celebration was extended to the universal Church, the feast was also celebrated with a Eucharistic Procession, in which the Sacred Host was carried throughout the town, accompanied by hymns and litanies. The faithful would venerate the Body of Christ as the procession passed by. In recent years, this practice has almost disappeared. It is my hope that next year we can prepare an outdoor liturgy and procession to celebrate this Feast.

Beyond the history of this celebration, I think the Feast is a good reminder of the importance of the Eucharist in our Faith; the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist; and the reverence it deserves. Over the years many Catholics have forgotten the reverence due to the Eucharist. As I explained to the children at their First Communion this year – Jesus did not say “this might be...this can be...it is if you want it to be...he said directly “this IS my Body...this IS my Blood””. So as we celebrate this Feast, let us remember the reverence with which we must approach the altar to receive Jesus. That reverence is not only due at the moment of reception, but from the moment we enter into the church. I ask on behalf of many parishioners who use the time before Mass to prayerfully prepare for the Liturgy – to please keep a spirit of quiet and reverence in the church proper. The narthex provides us with ample space to visit with and greet one another before and after the Mass.

Let us also remember that when we receive the Eucharist – we become what we receive; therefore we are to live as the Body of Christ with one another. We are to live united as one in Christ and committed to continue his service and love for one another.

God bless you all! Have a great week.

Fr. Jerry