

Corpus Christi - June 18, 2017

01.Dt 8:2-3,14b-16a; 02. I Cor 10:16-17; 03. Jn 6:51-58

Dear Sister and brothers,

A couple of months before Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen died, he was interviewed on national television. One of the questions he was asked was this: “You have inspired millions of people all over the world. Who inspired you? Was it a pope?” He said, “No. It was not a pope or a cardinal or a bishop, not even a priest or nun, but rather an eleven year old Chinese girl. He explained that when the communists took over China, they imprisoned a priest in his own rectory near the church. After being locked up in his own house, the priest looked out the window and was horrified to see the communists enter the church. Once inside, they went into the sanctuary, broke open the tabernacle and in a hateful act of desecration, threw down the ciborium scattering the Hosts on the floor. The priest knew exactly how many Hosts had been in the ciborium: thirty-two.

When the communists left they either didn't notice, or didn't pay any attention to a small girl praying in the back of the Church who saw everything. That night she returned, and slipping past the guard at the rectory, entered the Church where she made a holy hour perhaps of reparation for the desecration she witnessed of the Blessed Sacrament. After her holy hour, she went into the sanctuary, and kneeling down, she bent over and received Jesus in the Holy Communion with her tongue. Each night, the girl returned to the church to make her holy hour and receive Jesus in Holy Communion on her tongue just as she did the first night. On the thirty-second night, after having consumed the last Host, she accidentally made a noise that awoke the guard who was asleep at his post by the priest's residence. From his bedroom window, the priest could only watch in horror as the heartrending scene

unfolded before his eyes. The little girl tried to run away but the guard caught up with her and beat her to death with the butt of his rifle.

When Bishop Sheen heard the story, he was so inspired that he promised God he would make a holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament every day for the rest of his life. And he was not only faithful to his promise, but he took every opportunity to spread this devotion of the daily holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament. We don't know the name of the eleven-year-old Chinese girl of our story, but her heroic act of going to the church every night at the risk of her life to adore and receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament serves as a powerful testimony against the attitude of so many Catholics today who show nothing but indifference toward the Real Presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

My sisters and brothers, today we have two big celebrations – liturgically the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, **Corpus Christi** and nationally and internationally the great **Fathers' Day** celebration. I wish all the Fathers a very Happy Fathers' Day! Fathers, may you be the shining examples of great faith!

Jesus is asking us to eat his flesh, and drink his blood. He says, "Amen, Amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you do not have life within you" (John 6:53). Life comes from Jesus. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "I came that you may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Jesus came to die so that we live. He came to break himself so that the broken humanity is made whole. He came to carry our sins so that we can be free. He came down from heaven so that we can go up to heaven. He came to show us the way – the way to the Father, the way to heaven. Jesus is the way to the Father.

The Holy Eucharist is the center of Catholic worship. Vatican II document, **Lumen Gentium** puts it rightly, “The Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life” (LG 11). Jesus said, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh” (John 6:51). This is a profound theology on the Holy Eucharist from Jesus himself. This was THE TEACHING that made many of his followers leave His company. This was a hard teaching, a teaching that human mind could not just fully understand or accept. But Jesus was so insistent that they grasp this teaching, therefore he permitted them freedom to accept it or reject it.

If only people understood that the Lord is truly and really present in the Holy Eucharist, our parishes would never run empty of people for the Holy Mass. Today only about 25% of Catholics attend the Holy Mass. Jesus experienced this rejection 2000 years ago. The Holy Eucharist is a requirement for your life. In his teaching on the Holy Eucharist, Jesus uses a word ‘unless’. ‘Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you’ (John 6:53). ‘Unless’ That’s a catchy word! Remember in the Book of Exodus, the people in the desert were without food and feared for their lives. So, God gave them bread from heaven called ‘Manna’ which they collected each morning. Without eating that bread from heaven, they would never have made it to the Promised Land. It is the same with us; without receiving Jesus, our living Manna from heaven in the Holy Communion, we will not make it to the promised land of heaven. The Holy Eucharist is essential for our survival.

St. John Mary Vianney says, “Put all the good works in the world against one Holy Mass. They will be as a grain of sand beside a mountain.”

God bless