

The Bell Ringer

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, HYANNIS + JUNE 2019



Corpus Christi

Excerpts from the Homily of BENEDICT XVI on the Solemnity of the Sacred Body and Blood of Christ, delivered at St. John Lateran in Rome in 2006

“On the eve of his Passion, during the Passover meal, the Lord took the bread in his hands . . . and, having blessed it, he broke it and gave it to his Disciples, saying: "Take this, this is my body". He then took the chalice, gave thanks and passed it to them and they all drank from it. He said: "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, to be poured out on behalf of many" (Mk 14: 22-24).

The entire history of God with humanity is recapitulated in these words. The past alone is not only referred to and interpreted, but the future is anticipated - the coming of the Kingdom of God into the world. What Jesus says are not simply words. What he says is an event, the central event of the history of the world and of our personal lives.

“. . . I would like to meditate with you on just one aspect. Jesus, as a sign of his presence, chose bread and wine. With each one of the two signs he gives himself completely, not only in part. The Risen One is not divided. He is a person who, through signs, comes near to us and unites himself to us.

“Each sign however, represents in its own way a particular aspect of his mystery and through its respective manifestation, wishes to speak to us so that we learn to understand the mystery of Jesus Christ a little better.

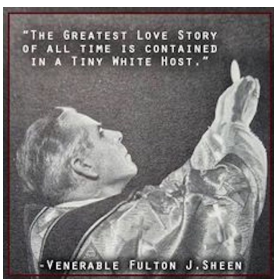
“During . . . adoration we look at the consecrated Host, the most simple type of bread and nourishment, made only of a little flour and water. In this way, it appears as the food of the poor, those to whom the Lord made himself closest in the first place.

“The prayer with which the Church, during the liturgy of the Mass, consigns this bread to the Lord, qualifies it as fruit of the earth and the work of humans. It involves human labor, the daily work of those who till the soil, sow and harvest [the wheat] and, finally, prepare the bread. However, bread is not purely and simply

Continued on Page 2

Learn more about the meaning and history of Devotion to The Sacred Heart of Jesus during its month. See page 5.

“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love.” See the Holy Spirit’s gifts. Page 4.



Venerable Fulton Sheen on the Sacrament of the Eucharist . . . on page 3.

Corpus Christi

Continued from page 1

what we produce, something made by us; it is fruit of the earth and therefore is also gift.

“We cannot take credit for the fact that the earth produces fruit; the Creator alone could have made it fertile. And now we too can expand a little on this prayer of the Church, saying: the bread is fruit of heaven and earth together. It implies the synergy of the forces of earth and the gifts from above, that is, of the sun and the rain. And water too, which we need to prepare the bread, cannot be produced by us. . . .

“And so, looking closely at this little piece of white Host, this bread of the poor, appears to us as a synthesis of creation. Heaven and earth, too, like the activity and spirit of man, cooperate. The synergy of the forces that make the mystery of life and the existence of man possible on our poor planet come to meet us in all of their majestic grandeur.

“In this way we begin to understand why the Lord chooses this piece of bread to represent him. Creation, with all of its gifts, aspires above and beyond itself to something even greater. Over and above the synthesis of its own forces, above and beyond the synthesis also of nature and of spirit that, in some way, we detect in the piece of bread, creation is projected towards divinization, toward the holy wedding feast, toward unification with the Creator himself.

And still, we have not yet explained in depth the message of this sign of bread. The Lord mentioned its deepest mystery on Palm Sunday, when some Greeks asked to see him. In his answer to this question is the phrase: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (Jn 12: 24).

“The mystery of the Passion is hidden in the bread made of ground grain. Flour, the ground wheat, presuppose the death and resurrection of the grain. In being ground and baked, it carries in itself once again the same mystery of the Passion. Only through death does resurrection arrive, as does the fruit and new life.

“Mediterranean culture, in the centuries before Christ, had a profound intuition of this mystery. Based on the experience of this death

and rising they created myths of divinity which, dying and rising, gave new life. To them, the cycle of nature seemed like a divine promise in the midst of the darkness of suffering and death that we are faced with. In these myths, the soul of the human person, in a certain way, reached out toward that God made man, who, humiliated unto death on a cross, in this way opened the door of life to all of us. In bread and its making, man has understood it as a waiting period of nature, like a promise of nature that this would come to exist: the God that dies and in this way brings us to life.

“What was awaited in myths and that in the very grain of wheat is hidden like a sign of the hope of creation - this truly came about in Christ. Through his gratuitous suffering and death, he became bread for all of us, and with this living and certain hope. He accompanies us in all of our sufferings until death. The paths that he travels with us and through which he leads us to life are pathways of hope.

“When, in adoration, we look at the consecrated Host, the sign of creation speaks to us. And so, we encounter the greatness of his gift; but we also encounter the Passion, the Cross of Jesus and his Resurrection. Through this gaze of adoration, he draws us toward himself, within his mystery, through which he wants to transform us as he transformed the Host. . . .

“In a very similar way the sign of wine speaks to us. However, while bread speaks of daily life, simplicity and pilgrimage, wine expresses the exquisiteness of creation: the feast of joy that God wants to offer to us at the end of time and that already now and always anticipates anew a foretaste through this sign.

“But, wine also speaks of the Passion: the vine must be repeatedly pruned to be purified in this way; the grapes must mature with the sun and the rain and must be pressed: only through this passion does a fine wine mature.

“On the feast of Corpus Christi we especially look at the sign of bread. It reminds us of the pilgrimage of Israel during the 40 years in the desert. The Host is our manna whereby the Lord nourishes us - it is truly the bread of heaven, through which he gives himself.

“[W]e follow Christ himself. And we ask of him: Guide us on the paths of our history! +

The Holy Eucharist

By the Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

“The Sacrament of the Eucharist has two sides: it is both a sacrifice and a sacrament. Inasmuch as biological life is nothing but a reflection, a dim echo, and a shadow of the divine life, one can find analogies in the natural order for the beauties of the divine. Does not nature itself have a double aspect: a sacrifice and a sacrament? The vegetables which are served at table, the meat which is presented on the platter, are the natural sacraments of the body of



man. By them he lives. If they were endowed with speech, they would say: ‘Unless you have communion with me, you will not live.’

“But if one inquires as to how the lower creation of chemicals, vegetables or meats came to be the sacrament or the communion of man, one is immediately introduced to the idea of sacrifice. Did not the vegetables have to be pulled up by their roots from the earth, submitted to the law of

death, and then pass through the ordeal of fire before they could become the sacrament of physical life, or have communion with the body? Was not the meat on the platter once a living thing, and was it not submitted to the knife, its blood shed on the soil of a natural Gethsemane and Calvary before it was fit to be presented to man?

“Nature, therefore suggests that a sacrifice must precede a sacrament; death is the prelude to a communion. In some way, unless the thing dies, it does not begin to live in a higher kingdom. To have, for example, a communion service without a sacrifice would be, in the natural order, like eating our vegetables uncooked, and our meat in the raw. When we come face to face with the realities of life, we see that we live by what we slay. It was our sins that slew Christ on Calvary, and yet by the power of God risen from the dead and reigning gloriously in Heaven, He now becomes our life and has communion with us and we with Him. In the divine order, there must be the Sacrifice or the Consecration of the Mass before there can be the sacrament or the Communion of the soul and God.” +

Venerable Fulton John Sheen (May 8, 1895 – December 9, 1979) was an archbishop of the Catholic Church known for his preaching and his work on TV and radio. His cause for canonization was officially opened in 2002. In June 2012, Pope Benedict XVI officially recognized a decree from the Congregation for the Causes of Saints that he lived a life of “heroic virtues” – a major step towards beatification – so he is now referred to as “Venerable”.

“Oh, my soul, how much longer do you wish to be so stingy with Jesus? Why so negligent towards Jesus who made you? Why so lazy towards Jesus who redeemed you? Who do you want to love, if you do not want to love Jesus?”

— St. Gemma Galgani

“God gives prayer growth precisely according to our degree of readiness for it. He forces no one. According as we are more or less receptive, He bestows more or less depth of communion. In the same manner, 500 people in a parish church all hear the same sound waves during the homily, but they profit from it exactly as they are or are not disposed for the message. Jesus taught the same truth in his parable of the sower: from the word of God some hearers yield nothing at all, while others yield thirty or sixty or a hundredfold.”

— Fr. Thomas Dubay

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Pentecost, which we celebrate on June 9, marks the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. They received gifts that allowed them to spread the Kingdom of God “to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

“We live surrounded by God’s gifts,” Father Frances Fernandez tells us. “It was first and foremost in Baptism that our Father God filled us with immeasurable gifts. He erased the stain of original sin from our soul. He enriched us with the gift of sanctifying grace, by which He made us share in His own divine life, and He made us His sons and daughters.” Other adds: “He also made us members of the Church.”

Father explains that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are new presents “which God bestows on the soul so that it can more perfectly and effortlessly, carry out the good works in which our love of God . . . is seen.”

The gifts of the Holy Spirit configure our souls to live the life of a child of God. But we must cooperate with our own freedom as well as our desire to live this life and apply our minds and hearts to receive these gifts from the Paraclete.

Pope Leo XIII tells us “These gifts, moreover, are so

effective that they lead the just soul to the highest point of sanctity, and they are of such excellence that they continue to exist in Heaven, though in a more perfect way. By the help of these charisms, the soul is aroused and helped to seek after, and to obtain, the evangelical beatitudes, which,



like flowers blossoming in the springtime, are tokens and heralds of eternal beatitude.”

So how do they influence our lives? Father Fernandez says *In Conversation with God*: “The gift of understanding shows us the riches of the Faith with greater clarity. The gift of knowledge enables us to judge created things in an upright manner, and to keep our heart fixed on God, and on things insofar as they lead us to Him. The gift of wisdom enables us to comprehend Him in preference to all other things, amid our ordinary work

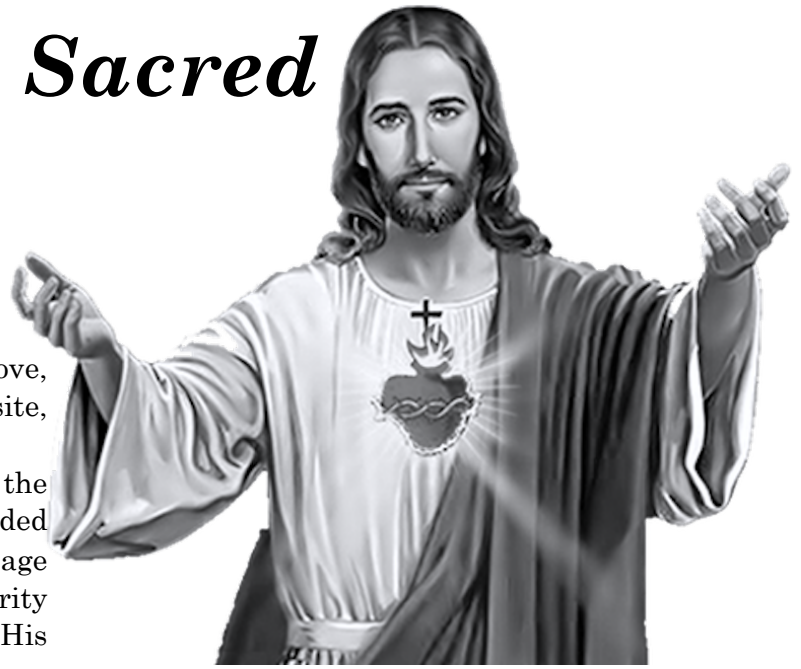
and obligations. The gift of counsel points out the paths of holiness to us — God’s will in our ordinary daily life — and encourages us to choose the option which most closely coincides with the glory of God, and the good of our fellow man. The gift of piety inclines us to treat God with the intimacy

with which a child treats his father. The gift of fortitude uplifts us continually, helping us to overcome the difficulties which we inevitably meet on our journey to God. The gift of fear induces us to flee the occasions of sin, resist temptation, avoid every evil which could sadden the Holy Spirit, and to fear above all the loss of the One whom we love, and who is the reason of being of our

life. . . . The Holy Spirit desires (far more than we could ever desire) to give us his gifts in such abundance that they form a torrential river in our supernatural life, and produce their wonderful fruits in us.”

Prepare for Pentecost and throughout this month to ask Our Father in heaven, humbly, to send forth the Holy Spirit to enrich us with his gifts. As the Gospel reports: “If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” +

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus



The month of June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus by Holy Mother Church. The Heart of Jesus is a symbol of love, notes The Sisters of Carmel, on their website, which explains the devotion in detail:

“The Church, governed and taught by the Holy Ghost, has approved and recommended devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In our age of religious indifference, when fervor and charity have grown cold, Jesus exhibits to the world His Sacred Heart as the symbol of God’s infinite love - the symbol of His own generous self-sacrificing love for men. Jesus shows His Divine Heart as a furnace whose burning rays of love are able to reanimate faith and rekindle love in hearts grown cold and ungrateful.

“But why His Heart? Because in every language, in every age, the heart is regarded as the natural symbol of love and affection. What more natural and expressive symbol is there, then, of the excessive love of Jesus than His Sacred Heart? The direct and material object of devotion to the Sacred Heart is the real, physical Heart of Jesus - the Heart of flesh, the living and loving Heart of our Blessed Lord; the Heart that beat in His Divine breast at the moment of the Incarnation; the Heart that loved us during the life of Jesus on earth, that poured forth its blood to the last drop on Mount Calvary; the beatified Heart now glorious in Heaven and still dwelling among us in the Blessed Sacrament; the Heart ever united to the Person of the Divine Word, to whom is due supreme homage and adoration.”

Therefore devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is actually a devotion to Jesus Christ Himself, focusing on His three-fold love — His divine love, His burning love that fed His human will, and His sensible love that affects His interior life. As Pope Pius XII noted in his 1956 encyclical, *Haurietis Aquas*: “...the Heart of the Incarnate Word is deservedly and rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that

three-fold love with which the divine Redeemer unceasingly loves His eternal Father and all mankind.

“55. It is a symbol of that divine love which He shares with the Father and the Holy Spirit but which He, the Word made flesh, alone manifests through a weak and perishable body, since ‘in Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily.’

“56. It is, besides, the symbol of that burning love which, infused into His soul, enriches the human will of Christ and enlightens and governs its acts by the most perfect knowledge derived both from the beatific vision and that which is directly infused.

“57. And finally – and this in a more natural and direct way – it is the symbol also of sensible love, since the body of Jesus Christ, formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, possesses full powers of feelings and perception, in fact, more so than any other human body.”

History of the Devotion

According to the Sisters of Carmel website, “From the earliest days of the Church, ‘Christ’s open side and the mystery of blood and water were meditated upon, and the Church was beheld issuing from the side of Jesus as Eve came forth from the side of Adam. It is in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that we find the first unmistakable indications of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Through the (Continued on page 6)

Sacred Heart . . . *Continued from page 5*

wound in the side, the wounded Heart was gradually reached, and the wound in the Heart symbolized the wound of love.’ (Catholic Encyclopedia)

“General devotion to the Sacred Heart, the birthplace of the Church and the font of Love, were popular in Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries, especially in response to the devotion of St. Gertrude the Great (b. 1256), but specific devotions became even more popularized when St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690), a Visitation nun, had a personal revelation involving a series of visions of Christ as she prayed before the Blessed Sacrament. She wrote, ‘He disclosed to me the marvels of his Love and the inexplicable secrets of his Sacred Heart.’ Christ emphasized to her His love and His wounded-ness caused by Man’s indifference to this love.”

Christ told St. Margaret Mary that if people would consecrate themselves to Him and make reparations to His Sacred Heart, He would keep 12 promises He outlined for her. The devotions attached to these promises are:

1. Receiving Communion frequently
2. First Fridays: going to Confession and receiving the Eucharist on the first Friday of each month for nine consecutive months. Many parishes will offer public First Friday devotions; if they do, you must perform First Fridays publicly. If it isn’t so offered in your parish, you can do this privately, going to Confession, receiving the Eucharist, and offering your prayers for the intention of the Holy Father.
3. Holy Hour: Eucharistic Adoration for one hour on Thursdays. (*Could you not watch one hour with me?*) Holy Hour can be made alone or as part of a group with formal prayers.
4. Celebrating of the Feast of the Sacred Heart which is celebrated on the Friday that follows the Second Sunday after Pentecost. According to the Sisters of Carmel, “Many Catholics prepare for this Feast by beginning a Novena to the Sacred Heart on the Feast of Corpus Christi. On the Feast of the Sacred Heart itself, we can gain a plenary indulgence by making an Act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart.

To read more about the 12 promises and the Act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart, go to The Sisters of Carmel website — www.sistersofcarmel.com and click Doctrines & Devotions. +

The Papal Prayer Intention for the Month of June

Focuses on Evangelization

That priests, through the modesty and humility of their lives, commit themselves actively to a solidarity with those who are most poor.

“Women are called to bring to the family, to society and to the Church, characteristics which are their own and which they alone can give: their gentle warmth and untiring generosity, their love for detail, their quick-wittedness and intuition, their simple and deep piety, their constancy.”

— St. Josemaria Escriva

“The Holy Spirit also gives you the grace to discover the image of the Lord in the hearts of men, and teaches you to love them as brothers and sisters. Again, He helps you to see the manifestations of His love in events. If we are humbly attentive to men and things, the Spirit of Jesus enlightens us and enriches us with His wisdom, provided that we are imbued with the spirit of prayer.”

— St. Pope Paul VI