

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, June 6, 2021
Solemnity of the Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ
Cycle B

A man named Scott entered the church and sat on a pew at the back. He heard the bell ring and saw the priest in white robes entering the sanctuary. He listened to the readings of the Word of God. He paid attention to words and observed the motions. His heart was beating faster. When he heard the words of the priest: “This is my body....This is my blood”, he knew it was really Jesus in the bread and wine. He wanted to stand up and shout: Hey, this is all in the Bible. This is great.

I just described Scott Hahn, one of my favorite theologians and author of many books, in his first experience of the Holy Eucharist. He was a Protestant at that time when he encountered Jesus really present in the Holy Mass. Because of that event and led by the grace of God, he became a Catholic professor, theologian, and author. Jesus in the Eucharist led him to conversion....

It is so good to hear something like this about a person whose soul is seeking the Lord and whose heart is open to a powerful experience of the presence of God. Many cradle Catholics, even if they go to Mass out of habit, have only negative comments for the Mass – the Church is crowded, the homily is boring, the choir is not good, the service is too long. We oftentimes forget that the Mass we are celebrating is the most beautiful event in the world. God is present. Jesus is here with us.

In that central moment when the priest elevates the bread and wine and repeats the words of the Lord: “This is my body....This is my blood”, Jesus is here with us in the Sacrament of his love. The bread and wine are transformed by the Holy Spirit into Jesus himself. That is why we receive him joyfully and reverently. That is why we prepare our hearts before receiving him. Every time we open our hearts in the Eucharist, miracles happen in our lives.

The Eucharist, the Mass, is so special because it is the celebration Jesus himself told us to “do in his memory”. At each Mass he joins us and offers himself to us. This is called his Real Presence. After Mass, we have an additional gift. Jesus remains present in the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacred host consecrated at Mass, which is reserved in the Tabernacle. There we can continue to experience his power and his love. There we are assured that in that special spot, the love of God continues to flow into our lives.

Many times, people are present to us only superficially – when they need us, when it is convenient, when they use us. The Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist assures us that our God walks with us in good times and in bad. He is readily available and can be counted on. Let us take advantage of this special gift which we, Catholics, have received. As one writer said, “The Eucharist is heaven on earth”.

Amen