

MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST; Cycle – C; June 22nd 2025
Genesis 14:18-20; 1Corinthians. 11: 23-26; Luke 9: 11-17

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

Easter Season is filled with the celebrations of great Mysteries. On Easter Sunday we celebrated the Mystery of the Resurrection; forty days later we celebrated the Mystery of the Ascension of the Lord; then followed by that we had the Pentecost and Holy Trinity Sunday. Finally we are concluding the season of celebrations with the great and most important Mystery of the Eucharist, which is traditionally known as **Corpus Christi**. When we remember the Eucharist we also mean the Body and Blood of Jesus.

Catholic Church teaches that the seven Sacraments were instituted by Jesus, in the sense that they have direct or indirect connection with Jesus and his mission. Among the Sacraments, **the Eucharist is known to be the crown of other Sacraments**. The reason is that, at the worthy reception of every Sacrament we receive the grace from Jesus. But when we receive the Eucharist worthily, **not only we receive the grace but the giver of grace, Jesus himself**. *In order to get a full understanding of the Eucharist we have to go to the accounts of the synoptic gospels which speak about the institution of the Eucharist by Jesus at the Last Supper and also together with that we need to take the Eucharistic discourse of Jesus in John chapter 6: 41-61 and also the short account of Paul in 1 Cor. 11: 23-26 which we have just heard.*

Of course, we don't see the word Eucharist or Mass used anywhere in the early history of the Church. But if we go through the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles we have reference to the Eucharistic celebration there. **In Acts 3: 42 we read, "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers."** *The breaking of the bread mentioned here was nothing but the Eucharistic celebration of the first community.* It shows that the Eucharistic Celebration began in the first century itself.

Today's second reading from 1 Cor. 11: 23-26 we have the short account of the Institution of the Eucharist by Jesus, which is more or less the repetition of the words of Jesus at the Last Supper. Paul's writing is important for the Biblical historians as it is *the first written account on the institution of the Eucharist*. Long before the first gospel was written by Mark, Paul wrote this letter to the

Corinthians instructing them about the importance of the Eucharist. According to John chapter 6 the feeding of the five thousand men is the pre-figuration of the Eucharistic meal Jesus will give to millions of believers in future. For this very reason, in today's gospel we have just listened to the feeding of the 5000 in Luke. When we go through the discourse of Jesus in John we know very clearly that the source of our eternal life is the Eucharist. Jesus 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. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day."** Jesus instituted the Eucharist to remain with us till the end of the world. Jesus continues, **"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him."** *In short, it is very evident that unless we eat and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus we will not have eternal life.*

From the discourse of Jesus it is very clear that at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass we are not approaching the ordinary bread and wine; but the very source of our eternal life. If we continue reading the 1Cor 11: 27 ff. we see St. Paul warning the careless Corinthians who approached the Body and Blood of Jesus in sinful state. Paul says, **"Therefore whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are ill and infirm, and a considerable number are dying."** So let us approach this great Sacrament with great reverence and also in a worthy manner.