

“What does the Catholic Church do for me”?

This was asked of me, rather angrily a number of years ago by a Catholic who was struggling with his faith. It was a selfish question, as if the efficacy of the Church is somehow measured or substantiated by someone other than Christ who established it. We, actually, may want to ask ourselves this question right now, as the answer is at the very heart of what we celebrate today.

Why is Corpus Christi a Feast Day? We know on Holy Thursday Jesus instituted the Priesthood, ensuring through his Eternal Priesthood he would *be with us until the end of time*. And he instituted the Eucharist, *take this and eat, this is my body; take this and drink; this is my blood*. The Church throughout the world ever since has heeded the Lord’s command to *do this in memory of me*.

The Eucharist is the visible proof of Jesus love for us, even if we have a hard time understanding the doctrine of the real presence. This miracle is a sublime mystery and really beyond our human intellect. But the fact that it is doesn’t mean we just leave it there. Rather, in faith we are invited to delve ever more deeply into its meaning.

How? There is an old saying that it is natural for us to spend the most time with the ones who love us the most. It is true, isn’t it? Do we spend enough time with the one who loves us the most, who gives himself totally and completely in this Most Blessed Sacrament, that St. Thomas calls the Sacrament of Love? Do we make the most of these indescribable, inexplicable and most precious moments?

The point of this Feast according to Blessed Paul VI “is to arouse us from our habitual familiarity, from our intolerable lack of appreciation for the Eucharist; and to devote ourselves to contemplative worship and explore its hidden riches”. Jesus performed many miracles, but is there one any greater than this, that perpetuates itself each and every day? That promises those who partake *will live forever*?

St Bernadine of Siena, one of the great preachers in the history of the Church, commented that upon death loved ones leave us things that have a lasting memory of affection. I have my Father’s Rosary that was given to him at his Confirmation over 80 years ago, and it helps me recall how much I loved him. It is so special to me it never leaves my house. Jesus left something much better: himself.

Why? To increase our love for God. St. Peter wrote *he has granted us his precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature*. Do we take the time to contemplate this heavenly gift?

In this remarkable Parish, everything that is involved in worship: the reverence in how Holy Mass is celebrated, the Extraordinary Form and the Solemnities like Thursday Evening, the prayers, chant, bells, the servers and the physical beauty of the Church is

done solely to give Glory to God and increase our love for him. And as our Spiritual Father our Pastor wants to inspire us to do the same; to desire God the same way God desires us. God the Lover seeks us the Beloved and the very best we can offer!

This Feast invites us to closely examine our preparation, our desire and our gratitude for the Eucharist. Do we properly prepare ourselves to receive Him? Do we desire to increase our love for him? Are we truly thankful?

Preparation dictates that we are free from sin. At the beginning of Mass the Priest says “let us call to mind our sins in order to prepare ourselves to celebrate these Sacred Mysteries”. The Confiteor follows, and we should recite it with sincerity, from the very depths of our hearts. This prayer is for our benefit! And if we become aware of a serious sin, we have Confession, another unfathomable act of God’s unconditional love and mercy. *He cannot deny himself even if we deny him* as St. Paul wrote to Timothy. He is love and to choose to separate himself from us isn’t within his nature.

He wants us to have a similar desire, to yearn for him so dearly that we are going to do everything possible to avoid offending him. When we approach the altar, we should humbly ask to be made worthy recipients and that our love for God will increase. In these climatic moments, try to remove any worldly concerns in your heart, because that takes up room otherwise reserved for who St. Gregory calls “so great a guest”.

“There is no greater prayer made to God than those made after Holy Communion” says St. Alphonsus. Why? Because we are at that moment in Communion with Our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ! That is why Holy Communion IS the greatest event that can ever happen to us. What about that sentiment inspires you? Is it profound gratitude?

If it is then it is important that we frequently remind ourselves with a very simple “today, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gave Himself to me”. All the Saints did this in some form. It impelled them to a greater devotion of the Eucharist and love for our Lord, which is why they are Saints, that they *live forever*.

The Procession that follows Holy Mass should also inspire us to spend more time in front of the Blessed Sacrament; either in Adoration or quietly after Mass contemplating the great gift that has been received. During the week when you are driving by this or any other Catholic Church, make an unscheduled stop and go inside to spend five or ten minutes simply gazing upon the Tabernacle. Jesus isn’t a King who requires us to make appointments nor go through security checkpoints to visit. He is alone in far too many Churches today. He calls us, and he awaits us.

What does the Catholic Church do for me? I believe we have our answer.

May Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament, be praised, adored and loved, with grateful affection, at every moment, in all the tabernacles of the world even to the end of time!