

## Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

We priests probably do not say thank you enough to the people in our parishes. At mass you help as ushers, greeters, readers, communion ministers, musicians, sacristans, decorators, and altar servers. Members and visitors contribute to the collection to help us pay salaries, bills and debts. You spend time during the week in prayer as individuals and as families. You serve your neighbors in need. All these actions lend integrity to the body of Christ when we gather here to worship God. We priests probably don't thank you enough for who you are and what you do when you sacrifice for the sake of the church.

Oh, sometimes we sacrifice only for ourselves. We develop skills and work hard in order to get ahead. But we help the people we love without expecting much in return. We do it because we love them, not because we want their thanks. Still, words of thanks mean a lot, and they encourage people to give again.

If you're sacrificing for someone who does not thank you, it is hard to keep going. In marriage, for example, if one partner feels that he or she is giving 110% to the family, and that the other partner does not give the same and does not appreciate the effort, resentment will grow. Sacrifice and thanksgiving are the foods that nourish human relationships. One action encourages the other. We also believe that they nourish our relationship with God. At mass we celebrate the sacrifice that Christ made out of love for us, and for that gift we give thanks.

Today's responsorial psalm gets right to the point. In answer to the question, "How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?" we sang, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord." Psalm 116 is familiar to many Catholics because we sing these same verses every year on Holy Thursday at the Mass of the Lord's Supper. We repeat them today on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, a day still known by its former title in Latin, Corpus Christi. Especially on Holy Thursday and today, these verses remind us of the sacrifice that Christ made. He poured out his blood not for personal advancement, but for us. Many times in his life, while singing the psalms, Jesus prayed the same lines we heard the cantor sing today, "A thanksgiving sacrifice I make." "The cup of salvation I will raise." Jesus raised a physical cup at the Last Supper. On Good Friday, soldiers raised his bleeding body onto the cross, as if Jesus himself were the brimming cup of salvation raised.

The thanksgiving we give to others need not be so dramatic, but it should be filled with the same love. The appropriate response to one act of love is another act of love. If someone is working hard to make your life better, it is appropriate to make their life better. The least we can give is a word of thanks.

So, lest I fall guilty of the same omission, let me thank all of you for nourishing the gift of your faith, for making the effort to come here to worship, for singing praise to God so harmoniously, for loving your families, and for making our society a better place. Your virtues give this eucharist its heart. In times of gratitude, we can all pray Psalm 116: "a thanksgiving sacrifice I make." "I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord."

Sunday, June 3, 2018