

When advertisers market products their slogans promise happiness. "Neslé makes the very best." "When you care for something in Woolite it shows." "Coffee-mate: The perfect mate for your coffee." In other words, "If you want perfection, but this product." Or, "If your relationship with a person isn't what you want, try this additive." Advertisers know we fear loneliness, loss of meaning, and mortality. We hunger for companionship, purpose, and long life.

Jesus knew the same thing. His friends felt the same hungers we do. But his product differed from those we hear advertised so often. His food truly satisfied the hungers of the world. It came in the simplest of forms--a morsel of bread, a sip of wine. But it was a banquet for the soul.

As a Catholic Church we continue the meal Jesus began. We offer our gifts of bread and wine. We ask the Holy Spirit to change them into the body and blood of Christ. Then we break the bread, pour the wine, and eat and drink this heavenly banquet, a foretaste of the one which awaits us in eternity. As Catholics, we believe that Jesus is truly present in the meal we share. He who taught with wisdom, worked great miracles, and died for our sins, has risen and appears to us in the form of bread and wine.

The feast we celebrate today is called "The Body and Blood of Christ." We use the expression "body of Christ" in two ways. It refers to the food we eat at Mass, but it also refers to us, the people who share the meal. We are the body of Christ. As Christ appears under the form of bread and wine at Mass, so Christ appears under the form of our community in the world. As a parish, we live in a neighborhood as food for the same human hungers. Where there is loneliness we bring companionship, where there is no meaning we bring purpose, where people fear death we promise life and immortality. Our beliefs make us ready to sacrifice the same products advertisers tell us we cannot live without, in order to support what really matters--family, community, and quality of life. At St. Regis, the many heritages which make up our community give us a unique opportunity to help people put aside their fears of one another. Our city needs this witness of tolerance. This is not just the feast of the eucharist; it's our feast. We are the body of Christ, satisfying the hungers of the world.