

**Today/Yesterday** thousands of people **are gathering/gathered** at the World War I Memorial to participate at Mass and adore the Blessed Sacrament outdoors. This year of Eucharistic Revival in the United States offers many opportunities for the public expression of our faith, including processions in the city next month.

The eucharist embodies important Catholic doctrines: We believe God exists. We believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We believe he is present to us in the eucharist. At times we take this faith literally into the streets whenever we gather publicly for a spiritual purpose like this weekend.

Whenever we receive communion, we profess our present faith in all these points. Receiving communion also strengthens for the future. Regular participation at Mass and communion deepens our faith and also our love. It helps us love as Jesus did and as he commands. Eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ heals our failure to love and nourishes us to love others.

The First Letter of John reaches a beautiful climax in the passage we hear today. It meditates on love, the greatest of all virtues. “Love is of God,” John says. God is the origin of love. We have love because we are “begotten by God.” This virtue comes from him. All of creation—all the forces of nature that sustain our earth and help it grow have this source: love. Creation maintains its order when love is its guide.

In fact, John says, “God is love.” When we experience love, we experience God. If someone says, “I don’t believe in God,” you could ask, “Well, do you believe in love? Because God is love.” John writes, “In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us.” The exemplar of God’s love for us is Jesus Christ. The exemplar of Jesus Christ is the eucharist.

To remain faithful followers of Christ, we have a one main task: love. As with any task, this one is challenging. It is especially hard to keep loving when the people we love don’t love back. The early disciples clearly faced this challenge too. Today’s second reading opens with the words, “Beloved, let us love one another.” John’s first letter echoes words that John’s gospel reports Jesus said at the Last Supper: “As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love.... This I command you: love one another.” Apparently, they weren’t.

Do we Christians fail at love? Yes, we are human. Sometimes our failures are merely irritating; other times they are harmful. The best antidote, the best nourishment is the eucharist.

Because we believe Christ is truly present, many Catholics spend time in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or in a tabernacle. This nurtures faith. But if we want to nurture love, we do more than adore the Blessed Sacrament that is the Body of Christ; we serve the blessed people who are the Body of Christ. Jesus taught us how to love everyone: Eat his Body, drink his Blood. We will experience how God loves us even when we don’t love back. When love is hard, when love takes effort, it will still bring us joy. God loves us first. Let us love one another.