

CORPUS CHRISTI; 2020.

Of the many Bibles that can be purchased, there are some editions that are called Red Letter Bibles. You may have seen them, you may even possess one. These are Bibles where the dominical words of Jesus, which is words spoken by Jesus, are printed rubricated, in red ink. This allows the reader to see more clearly the words of Jesus and pay particular attention of them as they stand out from the main body of the text. Take today's solemnity for example, The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, commonly known as Corpus Christi; words of Jesus concerning the giving of Himself in the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine are given a greater weight and depth of importance when they stand out from the rest of the text.

"Take and eat; this is my body which shall be offered to you; do this in remembrance of me."

"The bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world."

"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood, dwells in me and I in him. These things which I have told you are spirit and life".

"Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

These are just some of the words of Jesus that should stand out in our lives as servants and disciples of Jesus, which should be written on our hearts in bold, rubricated letters. We believe that Jesus makes Himself truly present in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. He appears to us in the form of Bread and Wine. At the hands of the Priest and the invocation of the Holy Spirit with the words of Jesus "This is my Body, This is my Blood", He is really here with us, before our eyes. It is an awesome thing to take our Lord, to see Him, to touch Him, to have in dwell inside us. But to appreciate the fullness of this gift without parallel, we are continually called to seek a deeper understanding of this encounter, to see what it means to possess this pearl of great price, this profound action that brings forgiveness, joy and eternal union.

St John Vianney writes, "Our Lord is hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, waiting for us to come and visit Him; see how good He is! If he had appeared before us now in His glory, we should not have dared to approach Him; but He hides

Himself, like one in prison, saying, "You do not see Me, but that does not matter; ask me for all you want."

"You do not see me", says St John Vianney. This has been at the heart of many of the controversies surrounding the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar for millennia. Not being able to see Jesus in all his glory and fullness of complete bodily presence has caused schisms and wars of words from the days of the New Testament. "I am the living bread that comes down from heaven says the Lord; and the bread that I give you is the flesh for the life of the world." And how did the Jews reply? St John tells us, "They argued with one another, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

The Jews that are embroiled in argument in St John's gospel and many people since have not been able to receive the full merit and profit of being embraced by Our Lord in the Eucharistic Sacrifice because of the endless need to want to enquire and dispel curiosity by the endless debating and seeking after explanations that fit an age of never being satisfied by anything unless it can be controlled by investigation and answers. They see with their eyes only. But those who seek also with the eyes of faith and with sincerity of heart, to be willing to be taught and follow the sound teachings of Jesus will be overwhelmed by the glory that is being held out before us in that simple host and that common cup.

The 14th century priest and monastic Thomas A Kempis, in his spiritual masterpiece *The Imitation of Christ*, writes, "Blessed is the simplicity which rejects obscure inquiry and advances along the sure and open road of God's commandments. Many have lost their devotion to pry into matters too high for them. It is faith and a holy life that are required of you, not a lofty intellect or knowledge of profound mysteries of God. Therefore submit yourself to God, and humble your reason to faith and the light of knowledge shall be granted you in so far as it be profitable and necessary."

For many devout Christians who place at the centre of their lives the love of receiving our Lord in communion and thereby uniting themselves with his life, death and resurrection, these months that have passed have been very difficult times. Being separated from loved ones, family members and friends is a painful thing and those same feelings and longings have been expressed by

many as they have been separated from Our Lord Jesus in the Holy Sacrament. For in all ways He too is our loved one, brother and friend. To these faithful I would say continue to use the prayer that makes an act of spiritual communion for those unable to receive the sacrament, for in it we remind ourselves that Jesus is truly present and our hearts and desires long to meet him in bread and wine. For the moment embrace Him as if he was being placed in your hand at the altar rail and long for that moment, which may not be too far away when that spiritual communion becomes a bodily communion.

For those who have begun to drift into patterns of living that are causing the desire to be with our Lord to be forgotten, remember the words of Moses to his people in our first lesson, "Remember how the Lord your God led you, do not forget the Lord your God." From tomorrow this Church and other Churches in the land will be open for private prayer. Use this time to sit before the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle and come again into the bodily presence of our Lord, kneel before Him, adore Him, love Him and if the memory of Him is fading come and reacquaint yourself with Him, that once again we may know more truly the fruits of His redemption.

AMEN.