

## Corpus Christi

Jesus Christ: Yesterday, Today, and Forever ~

Next Sunday we celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi, or the Body of Christ. Of course, every time we gather for Mass, we honor the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. So why is this special day dedicated to the true presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament?

From the dawn of the Church, we have celebrated Holy Week, where we commemorate the passion, death, and resurrection of Our Lord. On Thursday of Holy Week, we join Jesus for the Last Supper and the twofold institution of the sacramental Priesthood and the Eucharist. On that same day we have the Mandatum (symbolic foot washing), and of course, Our Lord's Passion hanging over our heads. It was on this night that he went into the Garden of Gethsemane. So, while the Church had from her beginning a day where the Blessed Sacrament was especially acknowledged, it had to compete with many other things. Enter Saint Juliana of Liège Belgium.

"Saint Juliana was born in 1191 or 1192 in Liege, Belgium, a city where there were groups of women dedicated to Eucharistic worship. Guided by exemplary priests, they lived together, devoted to prayer and to charitable works. Orphaned at the age of five, she and her sister Agnes were entrusted to the care of the Augustinian nuns, where Juliana developed a special veneration for the Blessed Sacrament. She always longed for a feast day outside of Lent in its honor. Her vita reports that this desire was enhanced by a vision of the Church under the appearance of the full moon having one dark spot, which signified the absence of such a solemnity. In 1208, she reported her first vision of Christ in which she was instructed to plead for the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi. The vision was repeated for the next 20 years but she kept it a secret. When she eventually relayed it to her confessor, he relayed it to the bishop." After a period of time petitioning the bishop, in 1246 he ordered a celebration of Corpus Christi to be held in his diocese (Liege) each year thereafter on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. As divine providence would have it, the Archdeacon of Liege at the time would eventually go on to become Pope Urban IV [the only Dutch pope to date] in 1264. While he promulgated the new feast day shortly thereafter, it wasn't finally embraced by the whole church until 1317. God's work through St. Juliana's visions and appeal took more than a century to come to full maturation – long after her passing. Let that be a lesson for all of us to be patient and persevering in the work of God. The fruit we bear for our sacrifices of faith more than likely will not be known to us until after our passing.

"This feast is liturgically celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday or, where the Solemnity of *The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ* is not a holy day of obligation, it is assigned to the Sunday after the Most Holy Trinity as its proper day. At the end of Holy Mass, there is often a procession of the Blessed Sacrament which is followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament." An indulgence is granted to all Catholics the world over who participate in a procession, confess their sins, and receive the Blessed Sacrament in a state of grace.

Which brings me to the reason why I'm writing this column the Sunday before Corpus Christi Sunday. Next Sunday, June 22, at 12:30pm, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish will host its annual Corpus Christi Procession. Fr. Bala and I will be there as we process a mile through the neighborhoods of Camas, witnessing to the true presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, exorcising the city of Camas of the presence of the evil one, and blessing it with God's grace. We sing and pray as we go, pausing for Benediction at stations on the way, just like this feast's origins in the 13th Century! Then stay for a parish picnic with BBQ, street tacos, and games to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the dedication of the present church.

### Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Holy Redeemer is blessed to have an adoration chapel that is open whenever Mass or adoration in the church is not happening. If you are a registered parishioner, you may obtain the code to the door to visit Our Eucharistic Lord at any time. In addition to that, Holy Redeemer is blessed to have 23-hour Eucharistic adoration in the church, from 9am on Friday, to 8am on Saturdays. To do that, we need volunteers to commit to an hour every week. If you think there is great value in having publicly available adoration in the Church once a week, both for the people who can attend, and for the people they pray for (you), then please sign up for an hour. We can't have public adoration without enough people making a commitment to be there. Of course, there is a backup system for when a person can't make their hour, so you don't have to be there 52 times in the course of a year. You can sign up by going to our website and clicking the button on <https://holyredeemervan.org/eucharistic-adoration> or fill out the brochure that can be found in the pews at Mass.

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St. Thomas Aquinas Parish also has an adoration chapel that people can drop in on at anytime to visit Our Lord. People can also sign up to commit visiting Jesus in that adoration chapel. There is a large frosted white board (~4'x6') on the wall in the hallway to the adoration chapel, with a 7-day week at a glance grid. Folks can use the dry-erase marker to write their name in the square for the hour when they commit to adore Our Lord.

Our Lady Star of the Sea in Stevenson has adoration from 6-7pm on Wednesdays.

May Our Eucharistic Lord Bless You,



Fr. Thomas Nathe

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<https://www.ctsbooks.org/why-go-eucharistic-adoration/>

**Fr Stephen Wang – June 9, 2023**

### Why Go to Eucharistic Adoration?

If you enter a Catholic church, you will nearly always spot a sanctuary lamp burning near the tabernacle, which is where the communion hosts are reserved after Mass. They are kept in this way for two reasons: first, so that Holy Communion can be taken to the sick and housebound when necessary; and second, so we can continue to worship Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

Jesus Christ remains present here in the communion hosts, in what we call the Blessed Sacrament. This is not just a metaphor or a symbol. He is truly present – Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity – in all his power and glory and majesty. So if a church appears to be empty, we know that we are never alone.

Whenever we come near to the tabernacle, even if the Blessed Sacrament is not exposed, we come into his hidden but powerful presence; heaven is laid open before us; and we can adore him and share our lives with him in a most intimate and profound way. We can speak to him, heart to heart. It is like Moses meeting the Lord in the burning bush, or the disciples walking up the mountain with Christ at the time of his Transfiguration.

This doesn't detract from the importance of the Mass, or the significance of the Blessed Sacrament as spiritual food – it simply helps us to appreciate his Eucharistic presence even further. As St Augustine wrote: "No one eats that flesh without first adoring it."

This is such a consolation, knowing that he is with us in this way. When we go to Mass on Sundays, it makes us want to be more reverent – from the moment we enter the church to the moment we leave. We want to be more and more conscious of his loving presence. We genuflect to him as we enter and leave our places. We pray to him as we prepare for Mass and after it has ended. We remember that we are in the Court of Heaven, in the presence of our King, in the company of this visible community, and with the hidden presence of all the angels and saints.

This comes into special focus when we have Eucharistic Adoration ("Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament") – when the large host is taken from the tabernacle, put in the monstrance, and placed on the altar for our worship. Christ is not "more present" in this way, but he is in a way "more visible" and given more public honor.

As we gaze at his Sacred Body in the host we become more conscious of his holy Presence, more attentive, more grateful. And because we are worshipping him as a community, in a public liturgy, our prayer and worship has more significance. We adore Christ as a community, in the name of the Church, bringing the praise and sorrow and intercession of the whole Church to him, together with the needs of the whole world. And we unite ourselves with Christ, through the Holy Spirit, in his praise and thanksgiving to the Father.

If the period of Adoration can conclude with Benediction, when the priest or deacon blesses the congregation with the Sacred Host, then this is a fitting climax to the liturgy.

Fr Stephen Wang

<sup>1</sup>Wikipedia: Corpus Christi (feast)

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.