

CORPUS CHRISTI June 22, 2025 Greenwich

(There are four props to accompany this homily: the infant Jesus, a crucifix, an icon of the Risen Lord and a large Eucharistic host.)

TODAY'S FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI, THE BODY OF CHRIST, RESONATES WITH THE DEEPEST MYSTERIES OF CHRISTIANITY--THE INCARNATION, THE ATONING DEATH OF JESUS, THE RESURRECTION, THE CHURCH, THE EUCHARIST, THE TRINITY.

THE MYSTERY OF REVELATION, AS RECOUNTED THROUGH THE GREAT SWEEP OF THE CHURCH'S LITURGICAL YEAR, TURNS UPSIDE DOWN ALL THE RECEIVED WISDOM OF THE WORLD.

CHRISTMAS SAYS THAT HUMAN LIFE, HUMAN FLESH, IS RADICALLY CHANGED; NOW A HUMAN BODY IS GOD'S WAY OF BEING IN OUR WORLD.

GOOD FRIDAY SAYS THAT GOD SUFFERS WITH US, FOR US, AS WE DO--- IN THE FLESH.

EASTER SUNDAY SAYS THAT THE ONE SURE THING OF OUR LIFE, THAT IS, OUR DEATH, IS NO LONGER QUITE SO SURE. WHAT SEEMED TO BE THE END IS JUST THE BEGINNING.

PENTECOST SAYS THAT NOT JUST THE HUMANITY OF JESUS, BUT OUR OWN AS WELL, IS MEANT TO RADIATE WITH THE VERY LIFE OF GOD.

TRINITY SUNDAY SAYS, GOD IS NOT WHAT WE THOUGHT. GOD IS NOT JUST ONE, AS EACH PIOUS JEW RECITED EACH DAY, BUT THREE IN ONE; GOD IS NOT JUST REMOTE AND DISTANT AND UNCONCERNED, AS GREEK PHILOSOPHY TAUGHT, BUT DWELLING AMONG US, AS A COMMUNITY OF PERSONS WHOSE LOVE MAKES THEM ONE.

AND BECAUSE OF THAT LOVE, THE FATHER, SON AND SPIRIT, CREATOR, REDEEMER AND SANCTIFIER, SEEK TO DRAW ALL OF US INTO THEIR DIVINE LIFE.

AND SO, WE COME TO THIS SUNDAY OF ORDINARY
TIME, THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI, THE BODY OF CHRIST.
AND THIS FEAST REMINDS US THAT NOTHING ORDINARY
NOW IS ORDINARY ANYMORE.

WHY THE BODY OF CHRIST BORN OF THE VIRGIN
MARY?

THE SON OF GOD COMES TO FULFILL ALL OF ISRAEL'S
HOPES FOR A REDEEMER; BUT HE COMES, NOT AS
WARLORD, RICH AND POWERFUL, BUT AS CHILD, POOR AND
VULNERABLE. HE COMES, NOT TO COMMAND SUBMISSION
OUT OF FEAR, BUT TO INVITE ALLEGIANCE OUT OF LOVE.

WHY THE BODY OF CHRIST, STRIPPED AND NAILED TO
THE CROSS? SO THAT THERE CAN NEVER BE ANY PLACE OF
HUMAN SUFFERING OR BROKENNESS THAT GOD HAS NOT
EMBRACED AND MADE GOD'S OWN--NO PLACE OF FEAR OR
FAILURE THAT GOD HAS NOT WALKED IN BEFORE US.

WHY THE GLORIFIED BODY OF THE RISEN LORD? IF JESUS MERELY RISES AS A GHOST, AND DISAPPEARS INTO THE MISTS OF MEMORY AND MYTH, WITHOUT SUBSTANCE AND PERMANENCE, THEN HIS HUMANITY ITSELF WAS EPHEMERAL, ULTIMATELY IRRELEVANT, MEANINGLESS.

AND IF HIS HUMANITY, HIS HUMAN LIFE, HIS FLESH, IS ULTIMATELY WORTHLESS, THEN WHAT OF OURS?

AFTER ALL, WE BECOME OURSELVES IN AND THROUGH OUR BODIES. OUR PERSONALITIES, OUR IDENTITY, OUR HISTORY, ALL ARE MEDIATED BODILY; IF OUR BODIES ARE NOT RAISED, THEN WE ULTIMATELY ARE MEANINGLESS, IRRELEVANT, INSUBSTANTIAL, ABSURD.

BUT JESUS, WHO IS INCARNATED IN THE BODY, AND SUFFERS AND DIES IN THE BODY, IS NOW RISEN IN A NEW AND GLORIFIED BODY. HIS RISEN BODY MEANS THAT WE CAN TOUCH HIM AND CONVERSE WITH HIM AND EAT WITH HIM. BUT IT ALSO MEANS THAT OUR OWN HUMANITY IS OF INFINITE VALUE TO GOD.

SO, TO SAVE US, THE LORD RESURRECTS US--RAISES
OUR BODIES--TO MAKE US LIKE HIM IN GLORY. THE
RESURRECTED BODY OF CHRIST, AND THE PROMISE OF OUR
OWN, DECLARES THAT EVERYTHING ABOUT US,
ESPECIALLY THE MUNDANE AND ORDINARY, IS OF INFINITE
IMPORTANCE TO OUR GOD, SO MUCH SO THAT ALL OF IT IS
REDEEMED AND TRANSFIGURED IN GOD.

WE RESIST THAT REVELATION, BECAUSE IN OUR PIETY,
WE THINK GOD SHOULD BE MORE OTHER-WORLDLY, MORE
TRANSCENDENT, MORE "SPIRITUAL." BUT OUR GOD IS MORE
DOWN TO EARTH, MORE HUMAN, THAN WE ARE.

JESUS IS RISEN IN THE FLESH, AND EATS WITH HIS
DISCIPLES, AND EMBRACES THEM, ALL TO SHOW HOW
PRECIOUS TO OUR GOD WE ARE--EVERY BIT OF US.

AND THE LORD BEGINS TO TRANSFORM OUR BODIES
BY GIVING US HIS BODY, IN THE GIFT OF THE EUCHARIST.

WHEN YOU ASSIMILATE ORDINARY FOOD, YOU
CHANGE IT INTO YOUR OWN SUBSTANCE. THE EGGS
BENEDICT OR PASTA PRIMA VERA BECOME YOU.

QUITE THE OPPOSITE HAPPENS IN THE EUCHARIST.
WHEN THE EUCHARISTIC CHRIST GIVES HIMSELF TO YOU AS
FOOD, YOU ARE TRANSFORMED INTO HIM.

ST. AUGUSTINE HEARD THE LORD SAY TO HIM, “I AM
THE FOOD OF GROWN MEN AND WOMEN. GROW AND YOU
SHALL EAT ME. AND YOU SHALL NOT CHANGE ME INTO
YOURSELF, THE WAY BODILY FOOD ACTS; YOU SHALL BE
CHANGED INTO ME.”

IN THE EUCHARIST, WE BECOME WHAT WE RECEIVE,
THE BODY OF CHRIST.

AND SO, THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST,
POURED OUT AT PENTECOST,
BESTOWED AT BAPTISM,
DEEPENED AT CONFIRMATION,
ENFLAMED AT EVERY SACRAMENTAL CELEBRATION
OF RECONCILIATION AND EUCHARIST,
THAT SPIRIT MAKES US THE BODY OF CHRIST, CORPUS
CHRISTI.

THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST IS FOR THE SAKE OF THE
CRUCIFIED BODY;

THE CRUCIFIXION IS FOR THE SAKE OF THE RISEN
BODY;

THE RESURRECTION IS FOR THE SAKE OF THE
EUCHARISTIC BODY OF CHRIST;

THE EUCHARIST IS FOR THE SAKE OF THE MYSTICAL
BODY OF CHRIST, THE CHURCH.

BODY OF CHRIST (CHILD OF BETHLEHEM)

BODY OF CHRIST (CRUCIFIED)

BODY OF CHRIST (RESURRECTED)

BODY OF CHRIST (EUCCHARIST)

BODY OF CHRIST (THE CONGREGATION)

AND SO WE EAT, WE DRINK, WE REMEMBER, AND OUR
EYES ARE OPENED A LITTLE MORE, AND WE KNOW:

BECAUSE OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY,

PIERCED FOR OUR SAKE,

RISEN FROM THE DEAD, AND

GIVEN AS REAL FOOD AND DRINK,

WE BECOME WHAT WE RECEIVE,

THE BODY OF CHRIST BROKEN AND POURED OUT FOR
THE LIFE OF THE WORLD.

AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD SAID, AMEN.