

June 14, 2020 – Feast of Corpus Christi - Cycle A
Father Larry Richards

How are you? I've missed that more than anything else – I've gotta say throughout these three months. It's kind of weird to stand in front of a congregation after three months of me looking at a camera all the time. So, it's good that we're back and it's good that we're back on this the Feast of Corpus Christi. When we focus on the readings, I think they were made just for today and the pandemic because it talks a lot about what is happening in our lives and where God is calling us. Again, I said it twice so everybody would pay attention – I don't know if you got that in the first reading. It says, "He therefore, let you be afflicted with hunger." Have you ever been hungry for the Eucharist in these last three months? I think so and God has let you be afflicted. That's not very nice. Why? Because then He will feed you with manna.

To me, it's been one of the greatest things in the fact that now we come to mass because we want to come to mass. We don't have to. You know, someone on time was saying it's about time the Church makes everybody go back to mass. I hope it never comes back that the people who come to mass are the ones who want to. Now you've all, people made fun of me and thought I was a nutcase when I talked about the way you come to mass is because it is a precept of the Church. The Church says you gotta go to mass and the Church can dispense you from that obligation as we have seen for the last three months. The Church has the ability to dispense us from the obligation so that, and we're still under a dispensation. You do not have to come to mass. So, the ones that come to mass, want to come to mass. There's others online who want to come to mass right now but they can't. Now the people that are here want to be here. You don't have to be. What a blessing. We have pretty much a full church for people who want to be here. So, hopefully this makes us yearn for Jesus – His precious blood, body, soul and divinity of the Eucharist more than we've yearned for anything else. What's such a blessing is that we've been able to make the whole pandemic without closing our Adoration Chapel. Here in Erie, you could go 24 hours a day 7 days a week and still be with Jesus in the most Blessed Sacrament – on purpose. By God's grace, nobody got sick. Isn't it amazing – who went into the Adoration Chapel except one of our staff members but she didn't go into the Adoration Chapel. She didn't. Anyway – that's probably why – she didn't go into the Adoration Chapel and that's why she got sick. But anyway, the rest of us we never go sick by God's grace. So, first thing is we have this hunger now for Jesus.

The second thing in the 2nd reading – a very short reading – but it reminds us a lot because it says that because we participate in the one body, we are one. Right now, at this very moment, there are people that are watching from Perth, Australia. There are people watching from Pakistan; there are people watching from all over the world and yet we, our families who are not here and the people from all around the world, we are one in the Eucharist. That has to be what we celebrate. If we sit there, you know, I was on, I had that 14 day quarantine – not talking to anybody for 14 days, it was a great blessing I'm sure – something God wanted to have happen in my life. I would sit there and after I would post my stuff in the morning, I usually post my stuff at night but because I was more bored than normal, I'd sit and look a little bit at Facebook and different things and I was always, always, always pulled more down

than I was pulled up. Always – because there is such division. I was so heartbroken that the biggest complaining and fighting and criticizing came from us – Catholics. We criticized each other about how the priests have let us down. The bishops have let us down, tore each other down. Those that aren't holy enough. Those who aren't conservative enough. Those who aren't liberal enough. Do you think in any way, shape or form that's of God? No – so why do we do it?

When we do that, we do that to Jesus because every one of us are members of His body and what we need to be doing is building up His body not tearing down His body. Again, the one who stands before God right now at this very moment and prays for us is who? Jesus. The one who accuses us at this very moment, right now before God is who? The devil. So, we get to decide who we are going to follow. Are we going to be an accusing person? I'm gonna accuse you. I'm gonna accuse you. I'm gonna accuse you. You're not Catholic enough. You're not good enough. Am I going to accuse other people and become part of Satan's army or am I going to intercede with Jesus and build up the body? More than ever, when the devil's attacking us, and he is, we need to come together and support each other and affirm each other. We're not always going to agree and we don't have to but, we can still support, and love and encourage, can we not? That is being the body of Christ and not just worshipping Him.

We're called to do both: to worship Christ and His precious body and blood as we do in the Adoration Chapel but to be His precious body and blood. That means we need to build up each other because we are building up Jesus.

The last thing that happens today in the gospel is He talks about the reality that when we come before Him, when we eat Him – the last line of the gospel is what? Whoever eats this bread will live forever. So, the call for all of us is to be Eucharistic people, to know that God comes. When we receive the Eucharist today, that is to give us life so we need to live life to the fullest. Think about all the dying that's going on around the world today. Thank about it. In America, just for the Corona Virus over 100,000 people have died. Now they get to live forever – we cannot forget that. They are alive and those of us who are here must live life to give glory to God. Live life every day and beget that life because once you and I receive Him as St. Augustine says "We become who we eat."

So today, when you and I come forward and we get to receive the precious body and blood and soul and divinity of Jesus, we become the precious body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus because He lives inside of us and takes control of us. So, what has to happen is we need to live the Eucharist. What does that mean? Jesus, who is the Eucharist, left heaven and died for us who are sinners; who died for us who didn't care for Him; who died for us who didn't even know Him – that He always put us first. So, what does that mean for us? That we must live that type of life. We must always put others first: that we live a life to give life to others. That's what it means to be a Eucharistic church. That's what it means to be a Eucharistic living person and that's what Christ is calling us to this Corpus Christi.

So today as we celebrate the great body, blood, soul and divinity of God, we should hunger for Him and desire Him: not because we have to but because we want to. We should desire Him more than our next breath. We should be people who do everything to build up the body of Christ, never tear it down and

we need to be Eucharistic people. That means we live life fully and we give our life away fully that others might have life now and eternal life.

Got it? Get it? Gonna live it? May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.