



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

Saint Louis Abbey
9:00 a.m. Mass
June 10, 2007
Abbot Thomas Frerking

Dear friends, what a joy to recall the principal points of our faith concerning the Most Holy Eucharist.

The Eucharist is, first, a re-presentation, a making present again, of the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross. It is the very same sacrifice as the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross; only the manner of its offering is different. As the very same sacrifice of the Cross made present again, the sacrifice of the Eucharist has all the efficacy of the sacrifice on the Cross: it offers measureless praise to the Father; it offers measureless thanksgiving to the Father -- hence it is called the 'Eucharist', 'thanksgiving'; its propitiatory power secures for ourselves and generally for the living and the dead the forgiveness of sins and the remission of the punishment due them; its petitionary power secures for us and generally for all the supplying of our other needs, provided this is good for our souls. Further, the sacrifice of the Eucharist offers us the inestimable privilege of offering our whole selves with the sacrifice, offering our whole selves and our whole life with Christ, in the Spirit, to the Father, thus giving their ultimate meaning and purpose to all our life and all our being. Dear friends, how we should take care, at each Eucharist in which we participate, to offer ourselves with the Lord in his sacrifice; how we should take care to ask frequently that the Eucharist be offered for the needs of ourselves, for the needs of the living and the needs of the dead.

Then, the Eucharist is, as well, a sacrament, that is, an efficacious sign of grace by which divine life is dispensed to us; but, as we of course know, the Eucharist is the supreme sacrament, the source and summit of the Christian life, and the sacrament toward which all the other sacraments are oriented, for the Eucharist contains the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely, Christ himself. The effects, then, of the reception of the Eucharist in holy communion are these: firstly, union with Christ, since one receives the very Body and Blood of Christ, and therefore the whole Christ; secondly, union with all the members of the Church, since they together constitute the Mystical Body of Christ; and union with him must also be union with his Body; thirdly, since Christ is the Bread of Life, the nourishment, increase and reparation of the divine life of grace in oneself, and therefore the forgiveness of venial sins and protection from the commission of mortal sins in the future; fourthly, since Christ said, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, I will raise up on the last day" -- fourthly, then, a pledge of resurrection and future glory. Dear friends, how we should take care, then, at each Eucharist in which we participate, to go forward to holy communion with full faith and full attention to what we are approaching, for what we approach is nothing less than the very summit of our life and being, namely, union with Our Lord, and with one another in our Lord, and the nourishment and increase of the Lord's life within us to the point that eternal life already begins in us. With what faith, then, with what frequency, with what



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fervor, with what devotion, with what joy should we go forward to holy communion to be united with Our Lord.

Finally, all these sacrificial fruits, all these sacramental graces, which we receive from the Eucharist, we receive because in the Eucharist is Christ himself, because in the Eucharist he is really present. After the words of consecration in the Mass what is on the paten on the altar is no longer bread at all; there is nothing there at all but the Body of Christ. After the words of consecration what is in the chalice on the altar is no longer wine at all; there is nothing there but the Blood of Christ. In response to this astounding and life-giving mystery and miracle, we fall down and worship. Yes, we worship the Eucharist, we worship the Body and Blood of the Lord in the Eucharist, and we worship the Blessed Sacrament carried and reserved apart from the Eucharist, and this is the same worship which we give to Almighty God, because this Body and Blood is none other than the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the Almighty Son of God. It is to this worship of the Eucharist which the Church especially calls us on this wonderful solemnity, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord, when we give thanks and praise for this inestimable gift of the Lord to his Church. We are to worship the Eucharist today, so that we are more and more deeply formed to worship the Eucharist all the days of our life, in joyful praise and thanksgiving, until the Eucharist leads us home to our Lord Jesus in heaven.

“O sacred banquet,” Saint Thomas exclaims in one of his great antiphons for the feast:

O sacred banquet,
in which Christ is received,
the memorial of his passion is renewed,
the soul is filled with grace,
a pledge of future glory is given!
Alleluia!