

## **CORPUS CHRISTI - THE BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST (5/24-25/2008)**

*Deuteronomy 8/2-16, Psalm 147, 1 Corinthians 10/16-17, John 6/51-58*

The shortage of food has sent waves of apprehension throughout the world – especially through the Third World. For billions, it is not just a question of tightening their belts, but of survival from day to day.

The recent cyclone in Myanmar has left over a million people homeless and undoubtedly without adequate food. Those of us fortunate enough to be where food is plentiful and to have the wherewithal to purchase it have to be concerned about our starving brothers and sisters elsewhere.

So food is on our mind as we celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi, the Body of Christ.

The Scripture readings do not ignore the plight of the hungry and the importance of food, but they focus today on the spiritual meaning of the sustenance that God provides.

The first reading says that man and woman do not live by bread alone.

Jesus quoted that passage from Deuteronomy when he rejected the temptation of the Devil in the wilderness as he was preparing to set out upon his ministry.

The poor of this world have the right to tangible AND spiritual bread and wine.

Especially the poor!

Most of the people reading this meditation will partake in the Eucharist on this weekend.

They will receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, a great privilege and a great challenge.

The *privilege* arises because we are the recipients of God's overwhelming gift of Faith.

Jesus is with us and within us at the Eucharist.

Just before we receive the sacred host, we announce together, "*Lord, I am not worthy, say but the word and I shall be healed.*"

Jesus says (though silently): I know you are unworthy, but come ahead; trust that my grace is sufficient for you. Take my body and my blood.

The Eucharist is a *challenge* because it dares us to live as Jesus did, for others.

It dares us to give our lives in love and service as the Lord has done.

That challenge is issued to all baptized Christians, not just the "professional" believers.

We are to take what we have been given - the Lord Himself - and share His love with all whom we shall encounter.

I have often told the story of the young man I confronted years ago; he never went to Communion though he was present every weekend at Mass.

He would leave church as the Communion time approached.

One Sunday I stopped him and asked why he never communicated.

He answered sheepishly but honestly: "I know that, if I receive, I will have to change my ways."

If you or I receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we are called to even deeper holiness and concern for others.

This challenging feast marks the continuation once again of Ordinary Time, even though "ordinary time" may be a misnomer.

It is time to put our faith into action. What could be more "extraordinary" than that?