

**Fr. Nick Dant's Homily, Saint Matthew Catholic Church, Indianapolis
Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Sunday, June 5-6, 2021, Cycle B**

The readings we have this year on the feast of Corpis et Sanguis Christi (the Body and Blood of Christ) focus our attention on the symbolism of blood. Primarily, blood signifies life – blood is the very life-force of all living beings, both animal and human. Drain us of our blood, and we cannot live. Blood also unites the various members of the body – all the cells, all the organs, all the parts (eyes, feet, limbs, hands) – in one life organism.

We are told in the Book of Exodus: “Moses took half the blood (from the sacrifices) and put it in large bowls; the other half he splashed upon the altar” – the altar symbolizing God! Then with the blood in the large bowls, “he took it ... and sprinkled it on the people.” Moses was signifying the one life-force that flows from God to his people – God and his people are irrevocably bound together – and because all the people share in the same life-force (blood) of God, the people then are united to one another, because all share in the one life of God. Moses says this is the blood of the covenant between you and God.

The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that our New Covenant established on Calvary is sealed in the very blood of Jesus himself, and his blood of the New Covenant is the very life-force of our Resurrected Life. The Letter to the Hebrews says, “Christ ...entered once and for into the sanctuary, not with blood of goats and calves but with own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.” (That is eternal life.) It is Jesus’ blood that was splashed on the altar of the cross and was poured over us in baptism. The one life-force of eternal life flows from God to us through Jesus.

In the Gospel of Mark we are told: “Then,” Jesus “took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it.” He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.”

So Jesus’ flesh and blood sustain, protect and free us as a people – irrevocably binding us to God and uniting us to each other as one body – one body pulsating with the new life that flows from Jesus’ blood. Jesus’ blood seals the covenant of new life for all people.

In our Eucharistic celebration – Sunday after Sunday, and day after day – we make present again Jesus’ gift of his self through the pouring out of his blood and giving up of his body. Our Eucharistic feasts are indeed a foretaste now of the eternal feasting of God’s Kingdom in eternal life. So, come let us eat of the holy body, come let us drink of the precious blood that is the very life-force that unites us with the eternal life of God with each other as the Body of Christ.

As St. Augustine said, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ is our feast day. For we celebrate that banquet and sacrifice that forges our identity and strengthens us to be the very body of the Risen Christ that we receive. Receiving the body and blood of Christ always calls us to do what he commanded: to share our lives as he did. When we come to Communion and dare to say “Amen,” we proclaim, “Yes, we will receive what we are and be what we eat and drink.”