

# The Body of Christ

## *Corpus Christi*

“It is important to be ever mindful that communion with Christ is deeply tied to communion with our brothers and sisters. The Sunday Eucharistic gathering is an experience of brotherhood. The sign of peace is a particularly expressive gesture which the faithful are invited to make as a manifestation of the commitment to mutual love which is made in sharing the one bread”.

**Pope John Paul II, “The Day of the Lord”**

The fact that all who share in the Eucharist are incorporated as one into his body means that “we cannot communicate with the Lord if we do not communicate among ourselves. If we want to present ourselves to Him, we also must go out to meet each other. The Eucharist is the Sacrament of Unity.”

**Pope John Paul II, “Mane Nobiscum Domine”**

“We must not deceive ourselves: it’s from our reciprocal love and, in particular, from the concern we have for those in need that we will be recognized as true disciples of Christ (*Jn 13:55; Mt 24:31-46*). This is the criterion on the basis of which the authenticity of our Eucharistic celebrations will be confirmed.”

**Pope John Paul II, “Mane Nobiscum Domine”**

“Worship itself, Eucharistic communion, includes the reality both of being loved and of loving others in turn. A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love [of others] is intrinsically fragmented.”

**Pope Benedict XVI, “God Is Love” (“Deus Caritas Est”)**

“In sacramental communion I become one with the Lord, like all the other communicants. As Saint Paul says, ‘Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread’ (1 Cor 10:17). Union with Christ is also union with all those to whom he gives himself. We become ‘one body’, completely joined in a single existence. Love of God and love of neighbor are now truly united: God incarnate draws us all to himself.”

**Pope Benedict XVI, “God Is Love” (“Deus Caritas Est”)**

Pope Benedict said that the celebration of the Mass, gathering everyone around the one table, is a reminder that all the faithful have been united into the body of Christ despite all their differences. Unity is “the truth and strength of the Christian revolution.” Around the Eucharistic table “people diverse on account of age, sex, social condition, political ideology” gather and become one. “The Eucharist can never be a private act, reserved to people who have been chosen for their affinity or out of friendship. The Eucharist is public worship, which has nothing esoteric or exclusive. Catholics must always be vigilant to ensure that at every celebration of the Eucharist all Catholics are welcome, no matter their “differences of nationality, profession, social class or political ideas.”

**Pope Benedict XVI, The Feast of Corpus Christi**

“Do you wish to honor the Body of Christ? Do not ignore Him when he is naked. Do not pay Him homage in the temple clad in silk – only then to neglect Him outside where He suffers cold and nakedness. He who said: ‘This is my body’ is the same one who said, ‘You saw Me hungry and you gave Me no food’ and ‘Whatever you did for the least of My brothers, you did also for Me’. What good is it if the Eucharistic Table is overloaded with golden chalices, when he is dying of hunger? Start by satisfying his hunger, and then, with what is left, you may adorn the altar as well.”

**St. John Chrysostom**

“The temple of our afflicted neighbor’s body is more holy than the altar of stone on which you celebrate the holy sacrifice. You are able to contemplate this altar everywhere, in the street and in the open squares.”

**St. John Chrysostom**

“The Eucharist commits us to the poor. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren.” (no. 1397)

**The Catechism of The Catholic Church**

“The most Blessed Sacrament is Christ made visible. The poor sick person is Christ again made visible.”

**St. Gerard Majella**

“The Eucharist does not just unite us to God as individuals who are isolated from one another. Rather, we are united to Christ together with all the other members of the Mystical Body. The celebration of the Eucharist should thus increase our love for one another and remind us of our responsibilities toward one another. Furthermore, as members of the Mystical Body, we have a duty to represent Christ and to bring Christ to the world. We have a responsibility to work against all the forces in our world that oppose the Gospel (*the Good News*), including all forms of injustice.”

**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

“If you want to understand the body of Christ, listen to what the apostle Paul says to the faithful: ‘You are Christ’s own body, his members’; thus, it is your own mystery which is placed on the Lord’s table. It is your own mystery that you receive. At communion, the priest says: ‘The body of Christ,’ and you reply ‘Amen.’ When you say ‘Amen,’ you are saying yes to what you are.”

**St. Augustine**

“For Augustine, Christ’s body is both on the table and gathered around it.”

**Impact Homilies, 1995**

“St. Augustine tells those who are to receive the Body of Christ in the Eucharist: ‘Be what you see, and receive what you are’ (Sermon 272). In another sermon he says, ‘If you receive worthily, you are what you have received’ (Sermon 227).”

**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

“Centuries after St. Augustine (354-430), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) taught that the ultimate reality of the Eucharist is twofold. It embraces both the substantial reality of Christ’s presence in the sacramental species, and the reality of the ‘mystical body of Christ, which is the communion of saints’. For Aquinas, it was impossible to discuss Christ’s Eucharistic presence without discussing his presence in the faithful which the “species presence” intensifies.”

**Impact Homilies, 1995**

“St. Thomas Aquinas said that the ultimate change that God sought in the Eucharist isn’t the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into Jesus’ body and blood, but the transformation of ourselves into Jesus’ presence. Our communion means that we receive the body of Christ in the Eucharist and perceive the body of Christ in our neighbor.”

**Ode to Joy Homily Resource**

“Some say that they are not worthy to take communion often. We take communion not because we are holy, but in order to become so .... Union with Jesus in communion makes us able to share in his holiness.”

**St. John Baptiste de la Salle**

“In every Eucharistic celebration, the Risen Lord is encountered in the Sunday assembly at the twofold table of the Word and of the Bread of Life’.

**Pope John Paul, II, “The Day of the Lord”**

“Is not the cup of blessing we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, many though we are, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.”

**1 Cor 10:16-17**

“You, then, are the body of Christ. Everyone of you is a member of it.”

**1 Cor 12:27**

“The bread and wine are transformed in order to transform us so that we can transform the world. St. Francis regularly received the Lord and was changed. Then, he was able to change the world by his life and love. He was able to perceive Christ’s presence in everyone, and people, in turn, could see Christ’s presence in him.”

**Bishop Paul A. Zipfel**

“When we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, we are assimilated into him. We become his Body, we take on his mind and heart, uniting ourselves to his love. When the host is offered to us as “the Body of Christ,” and we open our hand to receive it and say, “Amen,” we are saying yes not only to *receiving* Christ’s Body but to *being* his Body. We are saying, in effect, “Amen, yes, I believe that this is the Body of Christ, and that this is the Body I am called to be. I receive him to become him, to be Eucharist for others.”

**St. John Chrysostom (349-407)**

“Our Lord does not come down from heaven every day to lie in a golden ciborium. He comes to find another heaven which is infinitely dearer to Him — the heaven of our souls.”

**St. Therese of Lisieux**

Defending the Christians before the emperor Hadrian, the non-Christian Aristides described the love and care which Christians extended to others and said: “This is really a new kind of person. There is something divine in them.”

“God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.”

**1 John 4:16b**

**The Body of Christ. Amen!**