

Homily based on the readings from June 22, 2025 (Genesis 14.18-20; 1 Corinthians 11.23-26; Luke 9:11b-17)

As I am sure you noticed, this past Sunday was Father's Day – and, for that matter, Mother's Day was five weeks before that. This coming month, as everybody knows, we will be celebrating our nation's independence. Our national calendar is *filled* with similar observances, including commemorations of veterans, the labor movement, and former presidents. At a basic level, it is reasonable to wonder why we maintain these kinds of traditions. What practical purpose do they serve?

The answer to that question is essentially *the same* as the reason that families celebrate birthdays and wedding anniversaries. Even though certain individuals and institutions are indispensable every day of the year, it is important that we set aside particular moments to give them more attention. We need to take the time to acknowledge – explicitly and intentionally – the roles they play in our lives.

The same principle applies to many of the celebrations on the *Church's* calendar. For example: even though Christ's birth, death, resurrection, and ascension are all timeless truths, the Church has established specific days and seasons to focus on these fundamental tenets of our faith.

*Today* is one such occasion – the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ – the day on which we *particularly* celebrate the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

The Eucharist, as you know, is quite literally “the source and summit of the Christian life.” There is no experience we can possibly have – this side of Heaven – that constitutes a more intimate union with our Lord and Savior than physically partaking of his Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. As Saint John Vianney observed: “There is nothing greater than the Eucharist. If God *had* something more precious, he would have given it to us.”

It is a sad reality, given the current state of the world, that we are often forced to contend with outright attacks against the Body of Christ. If

you have been following the news, you may have heard about a Satanic ritual that took place this past March outside the statehouse in Topeka, Kansas, where an individual publicly desecrated what he claimed to be a consecrated host. There is an even *more* troubling story that has been developing over the past few weeks. As part of the National Eucharistic Revival, there has been an eight-week Eucharistic procession that has been making its way across the country, from Indianapolis to Los Angeles. Along the route, the pilgrims who are accompanying the Holy Eucharist have been repeatedly blocked and berated by a coordinated group of so-called Evangelical Protestants, who have been yelling hate-filled blasphemies through their megaphones. (May God forgive them!)

As shocking as these kinds of events may be, most of us here today are likely to face a subtler – and more insidious – set of challenges. The main issue for *us* is not necessarily outright sacrilege, but excessive *familiarity* and even *apathy*. When something has been readily available every single day of our lives, it is difficult to recognize how *precious* it truly is.

The struggle we face is twofold. First of all, we need to recognize how utterly *astounding* it is that the Only-Begotten Son of God would offer his own Body and Blood for us to eat and drink. In the words of Saint Francis:

O sublime humility! O humble sublimity! That the Lord of the whole universe, God and the Son of God, should humble himself like this and hide under the form of a little bread, for our salvation.

Secondly, we need to commit ourselves, fully and without reservation, to making our participation in this Sacrament the focus of our lives – not a casual observance, not a rite of passage, but the supreme act of Christian worship. If every baptized Catholic would undertake this commitment, we would never see anyone walk away from the Faith; we would never need to close a parish; we would never have a shortage of priests. This recognition and this commitment are the *reason* we celebrate this feast on an annual basis. We are calling attention to something that is not

only essential to the Church as a whole, but to the life of every believing Christian.

And so, as we prepare to receive the Holy Eucharist – the Bread of Life, the Bread of Angels, the Bread from Heaven – let us take this opportunity, which the Church has given us, to embrace – with the *fullness* of our being – the indescribable, incomparable, and completely unmerited gift the Lord has placed before us. He is *literally* giving us *himself*. The least *we* can do is offer our *own* selves back to him in return.