

After the Heart of Jesus ...

*The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying,
"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"
Jesus said to them,
"Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,
you do not have life within you.
Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life,
and I will raise him on the last day.
For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.
Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.*



Last month a youth group from Bloomingdale Church came to our church for a prayer experience using our Stations of the Cross. It was interesting watching the young people walk in to our church. Without knowing what was there, many of the teens went directly to the tabernacle area and knelt down on the kneelers. Here was a group of teens from an evangelical protestant congregation knowing that something special was in that location. Perhaps God plants a hunger for the Eucharist in our souls.

This weekend we celebrate the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. We hear the promise of Jesus that the Eucharist is His Real Body and Blood. Some Christians hold that the language Jesus uses in the sixth chapter of John is meant to be figurative, and not literal. However, when the Jews began to question how Jesus could be taken literally, Jesus does not try to correct them and indicate that he was speaking figuratively in metaphors. He deepens the literal sense of his words by saying "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink."

Through the consecration of Mass, the essence or substance of the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, while the form of the bread and wine remain bread and wine. This is to say "what it is" changes, while the physical properties remain the same. We can only know this because Christ told us so.

As Catholics we rejoice in the gift of the Eucharist every day, and we especially praise God for this sacrament of love on the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. In a recent letter on the Eucharist, Pope Benedict reminded Catholics that the Eucharist is a mystery to be believed, a mystery to be celebrated, and a mystery to be lived. The Eucharist unites us to God and to one another – may we believe, celebrate and live that unity today!

I mentioned the experience with the teens from Bloomingdale Church. Wouldn't it be great if all of us had that enthusiasm for the Lord's Presence when we entered Church – to acknowledge His Real Presence in the Tabernacle through a genuflection or bow? To highlight the presence of Christ in our Church's tabernacle a new sanctuary light has been installed in the entryway to the tabernacle area. It serves as a more visible reminder of the everlasting presence of Christ in the Eucharist.



This coming Monday is Memorial Day. Memorial Day takes on special significance in times of war. The news gives us nearly daily reminders of the sacrifices our young men and women make to protect our freedoms. Every week in the bulletin we include the list of family and friends who are serving in our Armed Forces, and many days one of the intentions at daily Mass is for their protection or safe return. On Monday, we will celebrate a special Mass at 9:00 AM in Church to honor those who have sacrificed so much for the cause of freedom and to remember all those who have died. Please plan on joining us in prayer on this holiday.

This summer our neighborhood gatherings of parishioners will be called Pastor's Forums and will focus on bring neighbors together for shared learning about some topic of interest, to pray together for our families, and for social time together. We are putting the schedule details together, and we need families willing to invite others into their homes for the evening gatherings. Please contact the Parish House if you are willing to host a gathering this summer.

Finally, congratulations to all of our graduates – from grade school, junior high, high school, and college. Commencement ceremonies recognize the transitions we make as we grow in wisdom and knowledge. May the Holy Spirit strengthen and guide all of our young people as they enjoy these times of looking back and looking forward!

As we believe, celebrate, and the live the Eucharist today, may we be strengthened in the call to live ...

After the Heart of Jesus!

Father John