

# FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

The name 'Corpus Christi' is the Latin word for 'the Body of Christ'. **The Feast of Corpus Christi** is celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday or on the following Sunday. **It is the celebration of the truth of the 'transubstantiation' of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ during the Holy Mass.** The Eucharistic Procession is a special feature of the celebration of this feast, and it was endowed with indulgences by Pope Martin V and Eugene IV.

The introduction of Corpus Christi as a feast in the Christian Liturgy was primarily due to the petition of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Augustinian nun Juliana of Liege. From her early youth, Juliana had veneration for the Blessed Sacrament, and always longed for a special feast in its honour. This desire is said to have been increased by a vision of the Church under the appearance of full moon leaving one dark spot, which signifies the absence of such a Solemnity. In 1208 she reported her first vision of Christ to her Confessor Priest as instructed by the Lord to plead for the institution of the feast of the Corpus Christi. The vision was repeated for the next twenty years. In 1263, Pope Urban IV investigated the claims of a Eucharistic Miracle at Bolsena, in which a Consecrated Host began to bleed. In 1264 he issued the Papal bull in which Corpus Christi was made a feast throughout the entire Latin Rite. This was the very first papally sanctioned feast in the history of the Latin Rite.

It is a feast focused solely on the Holy Eucharist. **"The Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life"** (II Vatican Council -Lumen Gentium). As Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, it is 'a sacrifice because it re-presents (makes present) the sacrifice of the Cross' (1366). By celebrating the Eucharist, we proclaim that Jesus has not withdrawn from the world; He has not left us alone.

When Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end" (Jn. 13.1). **The Eucharist is essentially the fullest act of gratitude prefigured in Melchizedek, finding its fulfilment in the Sacrifice of Christ.** Every Mass is a participation in and celebration of the Sacrifice of Jesus, but the feast of the Corpus Christi is the time to be especially aware of the Eucharist: "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk.22.19)

"As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor.11.26). With these words St .Paul reminds us that the celebration of the 'Lord's Supper 'is the memorial of the Redeeming Sacrifice of Christ. As Blessed Pope John Paul II said in his homily announcing the Year of the Eucharist, "there is a close relationship between "building the Eucharist" and "proclaiming Christ"....**We are reliving this wonderful reality in the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, during which the Church not only celebrates the Eucharist but solemnly bears it in procession, publicly proclaiming that the Sacrifice of Christ is for the salvation of the world".**

In the Sacrament of baptism, we receive the Holy Spirit; we are also given a commission to live the Christ-like life with the help of the 'sanctifying gifts' (Is.11.2) which the Holy Spirit gives us in Baptism. In the Holy Eucharist we are fed by the Sacramental Body and Blood of Christ; we are transformed by what we eat and drink, to become ourselves the mystical Body of Christ. Nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ we are 'send forth' to live His Presence in the world today. **'To receive in faith the gift of His Eucharist is to receive the Lord Himself'** (CCC 1336). "Just as I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me" (Jn.6.57). Bl. Mother Theresa, Bl. Pope John Paul II and the Saints and Martyrs down the centuries could be a sign of the Presence of Jesus in the world because of this 'indescribable

gift' (2 Cor.9.15).

As Pope Benedict XVI said in his sermon on 21.04.2011 for the Holy Thursday Mass of the Last Supper, challenging us: "Jesus desires us, He waits for us. But what about us? Do we really desire Him? Are we anxious to meet Him? Do we desire to encounter Him, to become one with Him, to receive the gifts He offers in the Holy Eucharist? Or are we indifferent, distracted, and **busy about other things?**

We have every reason to celebrate this solemn feast of Corpus Christi to thank God for His indescribable gift and to live our faith in proclaiming the truth.

We had the privilege of participating in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and joining in the Eucharistic Procession in a church in Bratislava, SK this year. We were edified by the number of attendance , overflowing the big church, and the Eucharistic Procession, with the 'little angels' dressed in their First communion dress, throwing the flowers honouring the Lord. In spite of the rain, people did follow the Lord in procession, adoring Him at 4 different altars prepared outside in the public place.

Such events are not so common these days but the importance of this feast should not be forgotten. This is a very special and memorable occasion where we can all remember our own first communion day and that of our children. Mass attendances for such solemn celebrations are coming down; but it is a real challenge for all of us to keep our faith alive.

Mary Pereira

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# MOST HOLY TRINITY

“The Trinity is a mystery of faith in the strict sense, one of the “mysteries that are hidden in God. They can never be known unless they are revealed by God. To be sure, God has left traces of his Trinitarian Being in his work of creation and in his Revelation throughout the Old Testament. But his inmost Being as **“Holy Trinity is a mystery that is inaccessible to reason alone or even to Israel’s faith before the Incarnation of God’s Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit”** (Catechism of the Catholic Church 237)

In Genesis, chapter 1.26 we read: “ God said, **“Let us** make man in our own image, according to our likeness”. God did not say: “Let me make...”.It implies that God is a communion of persons. So also “the Christian family is a communion of persons, the sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit” (CCC 2205). As some theologians clarify: **“Creation was the unanimous decision of the Triune God: The decision coming from the Father, executed through His Son Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit”**.

The mystery of the Trinity is fully revealed in the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry, at the time of his baptism: “When **Jesus** had been baptised, just as he came up from the water, suddenly, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a **voice from heaven** said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased” (Mt. 3.16-17). The Trinitarian nature of One God is revealed in the very first book of the Bible itself, and made known to the world at the baptism of Jesus. And at the end of his earthly presence, just before the Ascension, Jesus commanded his apostles to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the **Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit** “(Mt. 28.19). “ I am sending upon you, what **my Father** promised; stay here in the city until you have been clothed with **power from on high**.

**Trinity is a Divine Mystery which is not comprehensible to human reason or knowledge.** There is a story that St. Augustine was walking on the beach contemplating the mystery of the Trinity. Then he saw a boy in front of him who had dug a hole in the sand and was going out to the sea again and again and bringing some water to pour into the hole. St. Augustine asked him, "What are you doing?" "I'm going to pour the entire ocean into this hole." "That is impossible, the whole ocean will not fit in the hole you have made" said St. Augustine. The boy replied, "And you cannot fit the Trinity in your tiny little brain." The story concludes by saying that the boy vanished, as St. Augustine had been talking to an angel.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: **"The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God himself. It is therefore the source of all other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the "hierarchy of the truths of faith" (234).**

"Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance; for the person of the Father is one, the Son's another, the holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal" (CCC 266)."

We begin and end every prayer, both Liturgical and personal, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' In the prayer of the Creed we profess our faith in the Trinity; "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth; I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit.....I believe in the Holy Spirit..." Each time we make the sign of the Cross, we profess our faith that we belong to the Triune God through our Baptism.

St. Caesarius of Arles has said that 'The faith of all Christians rests on the Trinity.' **We are baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.** The significance of the Sacrament of Baptism is not our immersion into the water, **but our immersion into the life of the Trinity.** In the Sacramental Rite of Baptism, at the anointing on our forehead with the blessed oil, the Priest says: **"I anoint you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"**. Before receiving the Sacrament, the parents and the godparents of the child (or the recipient in the case of adult baptism), respond to a three-part question when asked whether they believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: to which they answer "I do".

The Catechism teaches in no. 263: "The mission of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father in the name of the Son (Jn. 14.26) and by the Son "from the Father" (Jn. 15.26), reveals that, with them, the Spirit is one and the same God. "With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified" (Nicene Creed). In the Eucharistic Prayer II, the Church prays **"all holiness comes from your Father, through your Son Jesus Christ and through the working of the Holy Spirit"**. "Inseparable in what they are, the divine persons are also inseparable in what they do." (CCC 267). **"God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"** (Gal.4.6). "The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you" (Jn.14.26)

Jesus said: "The Father judges no one but has given all the judgement to His Son, so that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Anyone who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who send him" (Jn. 5.23). **"No one who denies the Son, has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son, has the Father also"** (1 Jn. 2.23). "Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in

the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. And this is the testimony: **God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God, does not have life**" (1 Jn. 5.10-12).

Now the Holy Spirit is the love of the Father and of the Son. And therefore, where the Father and Son are One, that unity is brought about by the Holy Spirit. And " it is the very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom.8.16). " And no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12.3).

We are privileged to have the life of the Trinity within. Jesus said: "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and make our home with them" (Jn.14.23). St. Paul reminds us that we are 'the temple of the Holy Spirit' (I Cor. 3.16. 6.19).

Father, Son, Holy Spirit, One True God, we adore you. We thank You Father because you created us and we totally depend on you; We thank you Father for sending your Son to redeem us, and we thank you Holy Spirit, because you are dwelling in our hearts and transforming us into the likeness of Jesus.

Fr. JMK

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## **THE FLAME WITHIN**

Pentecost, which means fifty days, is celebrated fifty days after Easter. On this day we recall that fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit came upon Mother Mary, the Apostles and all those who gathered in the Upper Room where the Risen Lord appeared to the Apostles. As instructed by the Lord, they were waiting for the promise of the Father;

to be clothed with power from on high (cfr Lk 24.49). **“Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them”** (Acts 2.2).

This was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on human flesh promised by God through Prophet Joel: **“I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit”**. This flaming fire of the Holy Spirit came upon each one gathered in the Upper Room. Being ‘filled with the new wine’ (Acts 2.13) of the Holy Spirit, Peter started boldly to proclaim the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ bringing to faith the three thousand people. Those who welcomed his message were baptised and that day about three thousand persons were added to the faith (Acts 2.22-41). **From the day of Pentecost the mission of Christ and His Spirit becomes the mission of the Church and hence Pentecost is rightly called the Birthday of the Church.** It is significant to note that St. Peter, the first Pope was already the leader and spokesman for all the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday. United with and under the leadership of St. Peter, other disciples too started to proclaim the Gospel.

**It was on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit actually took up residence within the human soul.** In the Old Testament, we understand that the Spirit of God would descend upon a prophet or a messenger of God to inspire him to reveal God’s will to His people. But **something new happened at Pentecost. God came and dwelt not only among us as our Lord Jesus Christ, but within us through the Holy Spirit.** So St. Paul could ask the Corinthians: **“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? (1 Cor 3.16).** What a privilege it is that God comes and dwells within us!

It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that transforms us.



With the help of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to overcome the power of sin. **“If you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live”**. We often fail to live up to our calling as God’s children due to our innate selfishness, short temper or other weaknesses. But through our Baptism into Christ Jesus, we are baptised into His death. **It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the strength and the grace to die to our sins and to rise with Jesus to His resurrected glory** (Rom 6.3-5). The flame of God’s love prompts me to ‘walk in newness of life, which is impossible without the help of the Holy Spirit.

We cannot experience the Sonship of God, the Father (Rom 8.15; Gal 4.6)) and the Lordship of Jesus (1 Cor 12.3) without the help of the Holy Spirit. **It is the Holy Spirit in us who fills our hearts with the love of the Father** (Rom 5.5). It is not enough that we have the Holy spirit through Baptism but we need to live in fellowship with Him (2 cor 13.13). St Paul tells: **“Do not quench the Holy Spirit”** (1 Thess 5.19). When fire wood is burning, if we pour water on it, the fire will be put off. So too **when we commit sin, in our thought, word or deed, the flame of the Holy Spirit within is quenched.**

Similarly, when the fire is burning if new fire wood is not put, gradually the fire would be put off, hence we need to add more fire wood to continue the fire to burn; so too, **through our prayer, listening, reading and meditating God’s Word, worthy Sacramental life etc., we need to rekindle the fire of the Holy Spirit within** (2 Tim 1.6). We are enabled to work for Christ, to preach, without being tired only with the help of the Holy Spirit. ( Acts 4.31). So let us love this ‘Divine Guest’ within and try not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4.30) through our sins- our selfishness, lack of love and undue concern for people in our family and among others, our negligence in prayer life, indifference to our faith, Word of God and Sacraments and the like

**Jesus said that He came to cast fire on earth. He comes to give the fire of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of people, and he wants that this fire spreads INTO the hearts of all men through his Apostles and disciples. It was with this fire of the Holy Spirit the Apostles and missionaries throughout the ages went about preaching the Word of God and continued the mission of Christ with conviction and power, facing all the challenges including martyrdom.**

**We too have the same flame of the Holy Spirit burning within us. Do I cooperate with the grace of God to rekindle it in my day to day life and then bring this fire of God's love and power into the world around me? Do we follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit as Jesus, the Apostles and the Saints did? Or are we quenching His flame by our lukewarm faith?**

O Divine Flame within me, you are the love of the Father and the Son; enkindle me with a burning desire to live Jesus and with a greater zeal to fulfil His mission. You are the light of God; enlighten my mind with the knowledge of eternal things. You are the Spirit of truth; lead me to the truths of the mysteries of the Divine Word.

Fr. JMK

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## **LEBEN IM HEILIGEN GEIST**

Im liturgischen Jahr befinden wir uns in der Zeit zwischen der Himmelfahrt unseres Herrn und dem großen Pfingstfest. Einige Theologen haben gesagt: "Im Alten Testament war der Fokus auf Jahwe, Gott, dem Vater; das Neue Testament war die Zeit Jesu, und die Zeit nach der Himmelfahrt des Herrn ist die Zeit des Heiligen Geistes. Der auferstandene Herr erschien den Aposteln und gab ihnen Anweisungen durch den Heiligen Geist. "... Er

wurde in den Himmel aufgenommen, nachdem er durch den Heiligen Geist den Aposteln, die er sich erwählt hatte, Anweisungen gab“. (Apg 1,2). Bevor er in den Himmel aufstieg, sagte er zu ihnen “Und ich werde die Gabe, die mein Vater verheißen hat, euch herabsenden. Bleibt in der Stadt, bis ihr mit der Kraft aus der Höhe erfüllt werdet “ (Lk 24,49). Aus der Apostelgeschichte verstehen wir, wie sie und die Jünger in der frühen Kirche, durch den Heiligen Geist erfüllt und bevollmächtigt waren, als Zeugen Jesu Christi zu leben. Wir finden die Verheißung des auferstandenen Herrn, sich in ihnen zu erfüllen: ” **Aber ihr werdet die Kraft des Heiligen Geistes empfangen, der auf euch herabkommen wird; und ihr werdet meine Zeugen sein in Jerusalem und in ganz Judäa und Samarien und bis an die Grenzen der Erde.** “(Apg 1,8). Sie waren durch den Heiligen Geist geführt, die vom Jesus ihnen anvertraute Mission fortzusetzen: **“Mir ist alle Macht gegeben im Himmel und auf Erden. Geht zu allen Völkern und macht alle Menschen zu meinen Jüngern; tauft sie auf den Namen des Vaters und des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes; und lehrt sie, alles zu befolgen, was ich euch geboten habe. Seid gewiss: Ich bin bei euch alle Tage bis zum Ende der Welt.** (Mt 28. 18-20).

Jesus hat seine ständige Präsenz in seiner Kirche gesichert – In der Kirche, die er auf dem Felsen (festen Glauben) von Peter etabliert hat. „**Ich aber sage dir: Du bist Petrus und auf diesen Felsen werde ich meine Kirche bauen und die Mächte der Unterwelt werden sie nicht überwältigen.**“(Mt 16.18). Aber Jesus hat auch einen weiteren Beistand der Kirche geschenkt. **“Und ich werde den Vater bitten und er wird euch einen anderen Beistand geben, der für immer bei euch bleiben soll. Es ist der Geist der Wahrheit, den die Welt nicht empfangen kann, weil sie ihn nicht sieht und nicht kennt.”**(Joh 14. 16,17). Jesus wusste, dass es für seine Jünger nicht möglich wäre, sich an all das, was er sie während der drei Jahren seines öffentlichen Wirkens lehrte zu erinnern (Joh 14,26) oder in die Praxis umzusetzen; noch wäre es für sie, die Verfolgungen, denen sie in ihrem Leben ausgesetzt würden, durch ihre eigene

Kraft, leicht zu ertragen. Deshalb legte Er ihnen nahe, sich „mit der Kraft aus der Höhe zu bekleiden“, um sich nicht nur an das was Jesus sagte zu erinnern, sondern um sie, nach Anhörung seines Wortes, auch in ihrer Sündhaftigkeit zu überführen (Joh 16,8). Wenn aber jener kommt, der Geist der Wahrheit, wird er euch in die ganze Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit führen.(Joh 16,13),

Die gleiche Macht des Herrn, der Heilige Geist, ist uns durch die Taufe gegeben worden. Der Hl.Paulus sagt: **“Lasst euch vom Geist leiten, dann werdet ihr das Begehren des Fleisches nicht erfüllen. Denn das Begehren des Fleisches richtet sich gegen den Geist, das Begehren des Geistes aber gegen das Fleisch“.** (Gal 5.16,17) Unsere fleischliche Natur uns oft nötigt, rebellisch, ungehorsam, egoistisch zu sein; unsere Freiheit durch Genuß von Drogen, Alkohol, sündhafte sexuelle Freuden usw. zu missbrauchen. Deshalb müssen wir **“ durch den Geist die sündigen Taten des Leibes töten ”** (Röm 8.13). Nur wenn wir unser Leben dem Wirken des Heiligen Geistes überlassen, werden wir als **“Kinder Gottes”** (Mal 1,15) leben können. Ein siegreiches christliches Leben ist nur dann möglich, wenn wir vom Heiligen Geist erfüllt sind und von ihm geführt werden. In diesem Sinne ermahnt uns der Hl. Paulus : **“ Wenn wir aus dem Geist leben, dann wollen wir dem Geist auch folgen“.** (Gal 5,25).

*In der Zeit zwischen Himmelfahrt und Pfingsten, die Aposteln und die Heilige Jungfrau Maria verbrachten neun Tage im Gebet und warteten auf die Erfüllung der Verheißung Christi, seinen Geist zu senden. Die Gläubigen beten in diesen neun Tagen die Novene zum Heiligen Geist. Lasst uns beten, dass der Heilige Geist alle Herzen erfüllen kann.*

Bischof Ignatius di Latakia, Bischof eines östlichen Ritus hat während seiner Rede, anlässlich des Weltkirchentages im Juli 1968 folgendes gesagt :

**Ohne den Heiligen Geist:**

**Gott** ist weit weg

**Christus** bleibt in der Vergangenheit

**Das Evangelium** ist ein toter Buchstabe

**Die Kirche** ist einfach eine Organisation

**Autorität** ein Mittel der Herrschaft

**Mission** ein Werkzeug der Propaganda

**Liturgie** nicht mehr als eine Anspielung

**Christliches Leben** eine Moral der Versklavung.

**Aber mit dem Heiligen Geist:**

**Der Kosmos** ist auferstanden und stöhnt von den Geburtswehen des Königreichs

**Der auferstandene Christus** ist gegenwärtig

**Das Evangelium** ist die Kraft des Lebens

**Die Kirche** verkündigt das Leben der Dreifaltigkeit

**Autorität** ist ein befreiender Dienst

**Mission** ist ein Pfingsten

**Die Liturgie** ist Ausdruck der Erinnerung und der Erwartung

**Menschliches Handeln** steht im Dienst des Göttlichen

Vater, wir danken Dir, dass Du uns deinen Heiligen Geist gegeben hast. Hilf uns, den Heiligen Geist in uns durch unsere Sünden und Gleichgültigkeit weder zu beleidigen noch zu stillen "(Eph 4,30). Gib uns die Gnade, dass wir in unserem Alltag durch den Heiligen Geist geführt werden.

Mary Pereira