

28 HOMILIES FROM THE HERMITAGE: CORONA 28

TWO FEASTS: CORPUS CHRISTI and THE SACRED HEART

CORPUS CHRISTI

The Feast of Corpus Christi takes us back to Maundy Thursday. The Liturgy of Maundy Thursday is enriched by three themes: 1) The establishment of the Holy Eucharist. 2) The Washing of the Feet. 3) The impending Passion of Jesus.

The Gospel of the Mass gives us the passage of Jesus washing the feet of the apostles, and the insistence of service: The Messiah is to be the 'suffering servant'. This theme echoes in our 'Mandatum' (washing of feet); this and the imminence of Jesus' Passion leaves sufficient to dwell on the Holy Eucharist, in which He established for us the memorial of his Passion and death, and He tells us 'Do this in memory of me.' By this we are entered into Jesus' Passion and Cross, the means of our Redemption, and thus we celebrate Jesus' Passion and Cross whenever we celebrate Mass. The Mass is not a new nor another sacrifice: mysteriously over the years and the miles the Mass brings the Sacrifice of Calvary to us, for us to enter into the Sacrifice of our salvation. We believe that by the Consecration Jesus is present with us in His Sacrifice and we offer ourselves with Him, and in Holy Communion we receive Him into our very selves to be in and with us. In this way we share in our Salvation. We are unable to ponder this as fully as we wish on Maundy Thursday because of the other themes. Therefore we do so on this Feast: traditionally it had been held on a Thursday—as was the Last Supper. On this day we can pray and give thanks for the Holy Eucharist. And three things follow:

1. Calvary is the centre of our salvation and so the Mass should be the centre of our life.
2. In Holy Communion we receive truly the Body and Blood of Jesus. Therefore we should prepare for and receive Holy Communion with the utmost reverence.
3. We each/all receive the same Jesus and therefore we should be united and not grumbling or quarrelling among ourselves, for we have each receive the same Jesus.

THE SACRED HEART

The Feast of the Sacred Heart carries us back to Good Friday. The day carries several themes: a) the terrible Passion and death of Jesus: b) the Cross Triumphant/victorious: c) our own sinful and responsibility for Jesus' suffering: d) the love of Jesus. It is difficult for us for give full contemplation to all of these at once. The overall Liturgy lends us to our guilt and the price which we made Jesus paid—e.g. the Reproaches. The Triumph on the Cross is celebrated on Holy Cross Day in September: it is worth remembering that for many centuries this was the main theme of Good Friday, and many ancient depictions of the Cross present Christ as King in glory (one reason the veiling of the Cross during Lent). This Feast of the Sacred Heart is the occasion when we can dwell on the tremendous Love of Jesus and the enormity of what He did for us. For it was on the Cross that our salvation was achieved and thereby we can return to the loving God from whom we had rejected in original sin. God the Son, the All-powerful gave up His life, His ministry and everything, that we might live and return to God. This feast enables us to ponder and thank God for his wonderful love. On Good Friday we (rightly) repent our sins and what they cost Jesus. It is worth considering that if only any one of us was in the world, Jesus would have done as much for this one as He has done for everyone. 'O, Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us, sinners'