



Corpus Christi

The festival of the Body and blood of Jesus



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies”

JOHN 12: 23 - 24



A focus on Jesus

On the night before He was crucified
He met with the Disciples and share with them
the 'Last Supper' in which He told them to
break bread and share the cup in remembrance of Him
This the Church has been doing all down the ages
And we have this festival to celebrate it!



St Thomas Aquinas ... some thoughts

O banquet most precious! O banquet most admirable!

O banquet overflowing with every spiritual delicacy!

Can anything be more excellent than this repast, in which not the
flesh of goats and heifers, as of old,

but Christ the true God is given us for nourishment?

What more wondrous than this holy sacrament!

In it bread and wine are changed substantially,
and under the appearance of a little bread and wine is had Christ
Jesus, God and perfect Man.

How inestimable a dignity, beloved brethren,
divine bounty has bestowed upon us Christians from the treasury of its
infinite goodness!

For there neither is nor ever has been a people to whom the gods
were so nigh as our Lord and God is nigh unto us.



Why celebrate the feast?

Corpus Christi (Body and Blood of Christ) is the solemn commemoration of the institution of the Holy Eucharist. It is, moreover, the Church's official act of homage and gratitude to Christ, who by instituting the Holy Eucharist gave to the Church her greatest treasure. Holy Thursday, assuredly, marks the anniversary of the institution,

but the commemoration of the Lord's passion that very night suppresses the rejoicing proper to the occasion.

Today's observance, therefore, accents the joyous aspect of Holy Thursday.

The Liturgy and the Office for the feast was edited or composed by St. Thomas Aquinas upon the request of Pope Urban IV in the year 1264. It is unquestionably a classic piece of liturgical work, wholly in accord with the best liturgical traditions.

It is a perfect work of art.



Why I like it!

From the earliest days of my life, first as a server and later as priest this festival has grown on me.

I remember getting on my bike and cycling to church to be the one participant at the Eucharist on that day!

It was always the coldest day of the year in Pietermaritzburg.

I loved the service and, in particular, the words of Institution

“this is my Body” – “This my Blood.”

The full import of which I didn’t fully understand,

but the quiet words resonated in my heart and I knew I was in His presence.

The eating and drinking the eating and drinking of the wine, believing they were the flesh and blood of Jesus meant He was coming into me in a deep and wonderful way!

And He has stayed!

The Eucharist remains my strength and joy to celebrate!

Fr Graham Alston