

Corpus Christi feast

A Pastor giving a children's sermon on vestments asked: why do you think I wear this collar? One kid answered: because it kills ticks and fleas up to 30 days?

Dear Friends,

We celebrate the solemnity of the Most holy body and blood of Christ. This is added in the liturgical calendar in fourteenth century. The readings today help us to reflect about Jesus body and blood as Eucharist that was given to us as a gift and covenant.

There's a story told of a young Jewish boy named Mortakai who refused to go to school. When he was six years old, his mother took him to school, but he cried and protested all the way and, immediately after she left, ran back home. She brought him back to school and this scenario played itself out for several days. He refused to stay in school. His parents tried to reason with him, arguing that he, like all children, must now go to school. To no avail. His parents then tried the age-old trick of applying an appropriate combination of bribes and threats. This too had no effect.

Finally, in desperation they went to their Rabbi and explained the situation to him. For his part, the Rabbi simply said: "If the boy won't listen to words, bring him to me." They brought him into the Rabbi's study. The Rabbi said not a word. He simply picked up the boy and held him to his heart for a long time. Then, still without a word, he set him down. What words couldn't accomplish, a silent embrace did. Mortakai not only began willingly to go to school, he went on to become a great scholar and a Rabbi.

What that parable wonderfully expresses are how the Eucharist works. In it, God physically embraces us. Indeed, that is what all sacraments are, God's physical embrace. Words, as we know, have a relative power. In critical situations they often fail us. When this happens, we have still another language, the language of ritual. The most ancient and primal ritual of all is the ritual of physical embrace. It can say and do what words cannot.

For most of his ministry, Jesus used words. Through words, he tried to bring us God's consolation, challenge, and strength. His words, like all words, had a certain power. Indeed, his words stirred hearts, healed people, and affected conversions. But at a time, powerful though they were, they too became inadequate. Something more was needed. So on the night before his death, having exhausted what he could do with words, Jesus went beyond them. He gave us the Eucharist, his physical embrace, his kiss, a ritual within which he holds us to his heart.

Jesus gave them his own body to eat and blood to drink. He touches our hand and tongue to feel his presence in our souls and bodies. He is broken for our family. this is what we celebrate in every Eucharist.

So let us believe in the Eucharist and Jesus who comes to us every day.