

Reflection for Corpus Christi, Year B

This year, parish communities in many parts of the world can in some way celebrate this Feast of Corpus Christi. The body of Christ felt wounded and broken last year when everything remained closed. Today, the body of Christ is still wounded but it is broken and shared with those who can gather as part of the worshipping community of faith. There is a hunger, a search and need to belong. However, there is still a longing for a day when the worshipping community of faith will be able to gather in a safe environment free from any restrictions. As we read online or hear on the news, many parts of Europe and beyond are in a very fluid situation. Portugal, having been given the green light for people to freely travel to, will be taken off the list at the start of the week. Many people's plans are sadly up the air and a sense of disappointment and even anger, once again, is creeping into society. Not for the first time, we have reached the wisdom of the crossroads where we have to make a decision to do what is right for the good of society. That is not easy. Looming on the horizon is the possibility of COP 26 taking place in Glasgow. Strangely, we as a Eucharistic people are being called to reflect on creation, the environment and to have a care for Mother Earth. We are not a nomadic people; we have a focus. We gather as the Eucharistic community to be sent forth to go and proclaim a message. Rooted in God, it is our task as a people of faith to reflect on the Eucharist. We can only hope that the world may see in us the light of faith in which the Eucharist shines forth as a light to conquer people's darkness. Let us have the courage to gaze in wonder at the Eucharist even in these challenging times so that it may strengthen our feeble faith. Perhaps these words from Cahill Daly, the late Archbishop of Armagh will point us in the right direction to follow the right path in and through the encounter of the wisdom of the crossroads.

“Earth and water, sun, air and rain, with human hands and brains and the tools and technology which work on these elements, are combined together to bring seed to crop in the soil and then bring wheat to harvest and then to mill and bakery and to bring vines to fruition and then bring grapes to vintage and on to the cellar. The labour and the technology and science which produce bread from wheat and distribute it, or which produce wine from grapes and then store and later distribute it, are an exercise of the stewardship of earth entrusted by God to human beings. All this is consecrated to the praise and glory of God the Creator in the Eucharist. The bread and wine, product of earth and of human work and science and technology are transformed in the Eucharist into the substance of the glorified body and blood of Christ. Thereby there is already a mysterious beginning of that ‘hidden plan God made in the beginning...’ That he ‘would bring everything together under Christ as Head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth’ (Eph. 1:10) so that, in the whole cosmos, as well as in redeemed humanity, ‘God might be all in all’. Already in the Eucharist, in principle and in anticipation of the eschatological End, ‘everything is brought together under Christ as Head,’ and Christ, ‘the Head of the Church which is his body’ becomes ‘the ruler of everything,’ and ‘the Church which is his body’ becomes ‘the ruler of everything’, and ‘the fulness of him who fills the whole of creation’ (Eph 1:22-23). Christ ‘holds all things in unity’ and ‘all things [are] reconciled through him and for him, everything in heaven and everything on earth’ (Col. 1: 17-20)

God's creative power is at work in the Eucharist, as it is in the creation of the cosmos. Power to change the substance of things is the same power as that involved in creating them. St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan and one of the great theologians of all time, who died in AD 397, wrote a book entitled *De Mysteriis*, ‘On the Mysteries’. He speaks of the many instances of ‘change of elements’ effected by divine intervention, as recounted in Holy Scripture. Most striking of all is the change from nothing into existence involved in the creation of the world. He quotes the Book of Genesis: ‘God spoke and the world was made; He commanded and the world was created.’ Cardinal Cahill B. Daly, “**The breaking of bread: Biblical reflections on the Eucharist,**” pages 214/215