

## Homily for Feast of Body and Blood of Christ – June 3, 2018

Listen to this story about a four year old child who awoke one night frightened. In the darkness he imagined all kinds of monsters in his room. In fear he got up and ran to his parents' bedroom.

His father calmed him down and taking him back to his own room, put on a light and reassured him with the words "You don't need to be afraid, God is here with you. "The child replied: "I know God is here, but I want somebody here who has some skin."

The child was right we don't need a God in the abstract. But where is the reality of God?

At Christmas we celebrate God becoming human, we call it the Incarnation, God taking on human flesh. But was God becoming human, taking on human flesh in Christ .....was that only a 33 year experiment?

No! The marvel of Christmas, and the Incarnation of Christ into human flesh is that he has never stopped having human flesh....never stopped having human skin.

Remember these words of Saint Paul: "we are the body of Christ". Choir sometimes sings those words. We are not like his body.....nor are we even his mystical body....we are his body, his flesh....his blood and as long as we live in grace.....you and me we are God fleshed out in human history.

And on today's feast of the body and blood of Christ we need to recall such a profound truth.

When Christ died and rose on Easter.....he did not shed his earthly skin after 33 years. Once God took on human skin, he remains in human skin...we are his body.

Today we celebrate the Body and Blood, of Christ.....and his body with skin .....you and me. Oh for sure we root ourselves in the Eucharist when the priest repeats the words of Jesus over the bread and wine....."This is my body, this is my blood" They become the body and blood.

The priest does not say his own words. He says God's words. And the God who said "Let there be light....let there be fishes in the sea and birds in the air....in Book of Genesis .....said at the last supper "this is my body, this is my blood," God's words carry power....it's how creation began. Priest repeats those words.

Yet also through those words the people on the pew become the body and blood of Christ. So that when we process up to communion, the priest or Eucharistic minister, says the body of Christ, the blood of Christ.....what looks like bread and wine..... and tastes like bread and wine..... is the body and blood of Christ.

And so are you...so am I.... so are we. Holding up chalice.... Recall what we said. You and your face are reflected in a beautiful way on this chalice. We along with Christ offer ourselves to the heavenly Father. We are the body and blood too.

To bring this point home maybe when people come to communion, it helps to recall the words of Saint Augustine who said : "Believe what you see...see what you believe, and become what you are: the Body of Christ."

When we say "Amen" ...we are saying "Yes I believe this is the Body and Blood of Christ and that I will be the Body of Christ to others." I will be Eucharist for others....for the world.

And do you know the implications of this? You know that son or daughter of yours who no longer goes to church? You know that brother or sister of yours who no longer goes to church....you know that niece or nephew who no longer goes to church.

If you love them.....and they are a practicing member of your family....and are open to your love....they are in touch with the body of Christ. They cannot be lost.

I better clarify what I mean by a practicing member of a family. They speak to others in the family....visit them.....show up at weddings.....funerals.....baptisms.....first communions.....

If your relative who does not go to church....visits you is in contact with you....and they are open to your love...they are in touch with the body of Christ.

Theologians give this example: The woman in the gospel who is suffering from a hemorrhage....touches the hem of Jesus garment....and Jesus says "who touched me". He felt the power going out .....she had touched Christ. She was healed.

If your non practicing catholic relative is in touch with you.....they are touching the hem of the garment.....they are touching the body of Christ. Now they are not yet in the boat....but they have a life line....they still have things to do....but they are not lost at sea.

So the question for those coming to communion today is this will you "See what you believe....become what you see....and become what you are: the Body of Christ."

Will your Amen mean "Yes I believe this is the Body and Blood of Christ and that I will be the body of Christ to others" Will you?