

Rev. Mark J. Vyverman
Homily for Corpus Christi B
June 2nd and 3rd, 2018

In another couple weeks I will be celebrating my 25th anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood. Looking back, these years have seemed to pass by rather quickly for me. As I have started to reflect on this upcoming anniversary, I am reminded of a question that I have been asked by school children (in the many the different schools I have served) over the years: “What do you enjoy about being a priest?” I have answered this question in several ways: my visits to the school, the hospitals, the nursing homes, my work with couples preparing for marriage. I certainly enjoy all these aspects of priesthood and many others. But as I approach my Silver Jubilee, I really have to stop and think: What do I enjoy about being a priest? The part that I can’t take for granted is the celebration of the Mass, the Eucharist.

I have considered it a great privilege to be able to pray the prayers of consecration, the prayers over the bread and the wine, asking God to change them into the Body and Blood of Christ. I think about all the priests that I knew as a boy in my home parish of St. Mary in Kalamazoo and then all the priests I have worked with over these years. I always knew that it was something special that they were called to do when they prayed over the

bread and the wine. Sometimes I even find it hard to believe now that I have been called, that I am worthy to do something so holy. I pray using the words that Jesus spoke: "Take it; this is my body. This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many."

This feast of Corpus Christi, the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, is a day celebrated by the Church since the time of St. Thomas Aquinas nearly 800 years ago. It is a feast that reminds us how important, how central the Body and Blood of Jesus is to our faith. This very simple bread that we eat, this wine that we drink is a constant reminder of the love of Christ, of the fact that God is present in our lives in a very special way. If we truly believe in this power of the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ, we catch a glimpse of the wonder, the mystery of God, how anything is possible.

When we eat this bread, when we drink this cup, we take the glory of the Lord into our lives, allowing it to change us and be a part of us. I know that this Heavenly food has very much influenced my life as a priest and deepened my devotion to God. Let this Heavenly food change your life in the same way, so that it may deepen your faith and your love of God!