

CORPUS CHRISTI SUNDAY

On this Solemnity of Corpus Christi we renew our devotion to our Eucharistic Lord. We believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the sacred Host because it is a solemn dogma taught by Christ Himself, proclaimed by his Church down through the centuries and fostered by the popes and saints from time immemorial. The dogma is found in Saint John's Gospel (ch. 6) when the Lord stated: "Unless you eat my Body and drink my Blood you will not have life in you." The Greek word for life used here was *zoe* which means spiritual life as distinct to physical life *bios*. When the Jews complained about such a teaching, Christ further insisted that 'this bread' the consecrated host is 'real flesh' not once, but three times. Although it is a divine mystery that God hides Himself under the appearances of the host, so as to feed our souls, that does not infer that it is contrary to reason. I do not understand how wifi works but it exists on my phone. This feast dates back to the 13th century when God worked a Eucharistic Miracle at Bolsena near Orvieto in Italy. At Mass, during the consecration, Fr. Peter, from Prague, witnessed that the host bled onto the altar linen, which inspired Pope Urban to institute today's feast. St Thomas Aquinas was asked to write the hymns and Mass and to present an explanation of the dogma in his doctrine on transubstantiation. Our Millennial Saint, Carlo Acutis, provides us with a splendid cartoon explanation for teens of this on his website. So during the Eucharistic Prayer, at the consecration, which relives the suffering and death of the Lord, the words said over the bread and wine by God's divine power change them into his Body and Blood though the appearance of bread and wine remain. For that reason we don't say – as do Protestants – that we receive bread at holy Communion but the host (meaning offered victim) because it is really the substance of Christ and not bread. Some Eucharistic miracles containing blood and tissue of recent times have been examined by Forensic Medicine and found that it was human heart tissue that bore signs of distress. A comprehensive book called ***Reasons to Believe***, provides fascinating reading on this topic. Lastly, the discipline is the application of this divine mystery to our lives. The Church thus stipulates three conditions to receive Holy Communion: 1. that the recipient be a believing Catholic; 2. that one be free of mortal sin, in the state of grace or sanctifying grace so as to receive the Author of grace; 3. that one prepares their soul with a one hour fast beforehand. This discipline can change over time. For example, in the fifties the fast was from midnight from all food and water to receive Holy Communion. So today, let us show great love towards our God, in our Eucharistic procession after Mass, who humbles himself to feed our souls and prepare us for eternal life.