

Weekly Message from Fr William for Thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time 2022

Dear People of St Mary's, last Sunday was *Corpus Christi*. I spoke about Eucharistic Adoration, possibly the most treasured devotion in the church. It's a devotion that sprang up in the church in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. In this devotion Christ, present in the consecrated host, and placed on the altar, is adored. I took the opportunity of this great feast to offer some time in Eucharistic Adoration after all three Sunday masses. It's something we could do again if people wanted.

Devotions are different to Liturgy. Liturgy is the celebration of the Sacraments instituted by Christ and therefore core to our Christian spirituality. Devotions are acts of love that have sprung up since then over the centuries from among the people of God. They are, you could say, optional extras that can enrich our Christian spirituality.

By contrast, Christ's presence in the Liturgy is dynamic. This is Christ offering himself in sacrifice to the Father in the Sacrifice of the Mass. And when we eat his body and drink his blood we become part of the sacrifice.

Our participation in the Liturgy is correspondingly dynamic. Yes there is a moment of adoration – silent and still – after the consecration. But we are also offering Christ 'upwards' in sacrifice to the Father. This is 'my sacrifice and yours' that we pray will be 'acceptable to the Father'. It's not just me offering the sacrifice. 'We offer this holy and living sacrifice.' This is why I now invite you to stand with me for the Eucharistic Prayer. We're doing this together. So keep your eyes fixed, as I do, on the liturgical actions at the altar. This is the 'full, conscious and active participation' the Second Vatican Council calls us to in the celebration of the Liturgy. (*Sacrosanctum Concilium 14*)

And when we receive Holy Communion we become part of the sacrifice.

I took the opportunity on *Corpus Christi* to re-issue some guidelines about receiving communion. Come up in two lines and step forward ready to receive communion as soon as you can. No need to be giving way to the person next to you. Although I generally alternate side to side, I'm making judgements all the time about individual needs. If, for example, there's a parent with a young child I may give them both at the same time. Many of us will remember the days when we knelt at a communion rail for Holy Communion. We took our place as soon as there was a space, and got ready to receive. It's a similar principle now. Step forward as soon as you can, so that you're standing next to the person receiving communion at that moment. And when you put out your hand to receive communion, keep your hand open, flat, and steady. I was explaining why this is the easiest and safest way for me to get the host into your hand.

Trinity Sunday, *Corpus Christi*, and last Friday the Sacred Heart were the final echoes of the Easter Season. We go forward now together into Ordinary Time.



Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 26 June 2022