

Rev. Toan Do
Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a
First Corinthians 10:16-17
John 6:51-58

**THE BODY AND BLOOD SOLEMNITY
EPIPHANY CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Louisville, KY, USA
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This very passage that we listened to today is from the Gospel of John; it is from Chapter six, and it's toward the end of the chapter. Chapter six in the gospel is often known as the bread of life discourse. Because from the beginning to the end, Jesus talks repeatedly about the analogy or the metaphor of how one feeds on Him and believes in Him, who God sent, will have life eternal. I would like to bring back to our memories, a few verses ago, three verses to be exact. In the same Chapter 5:19, Jesus said to the same crowd, the Jewish crowd, very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on His own but does only what He sees God the Father doing. For whatever God does, the Son does likewise.

In chapter 5, verse 30, He said to the same crowd, I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and I seek to do not my own will, but the will of God who sent me. In today's gospel, Chapter 6, verse 57, just as the living God sent me, I have life because of God. Also, the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. Putting these three verses together and trying to make sense of the Feast of Solemnity, which we celebrate this weekend as we just begin all the weeks from now until our liturgical calendar in ordinary time. The church prepared this for a purpose, I believe. From now until the end of our Fifth Liturgical Year, we feed on the Eucharist and the mystery: Jesus and God live in us. We have life because of God, who sent Jesus. We have life because of Jesus.

To make sense of that, I believe one thing I could think of, or at least the theme is, from what verses I shared with you earlier, in addition to the gospel, Jesus is the center of our life here on earth. So, when we celebrate the Eucharist like Jesus Himself, who was sent out and has flown because of God, we participate in this mystery of the Eucharist. We, too, after the Eucharist, are sent out to be Eucharistic disciples, even more so, I believe, to be Eucharistic apostles. There's a slight distinction between the two: the word "disciple" refers to someone who follows Jesus. The Eucharistic apostle is the one who is sent after having received the mystery of the Eucharist.

Yesterday, Friday, some already told me they didn't see me at morning Mass. You recall this past week, we priests spent our time at St. Meinrad. I skipped a few sessions. (laughing) But yesterday I planned to have a day before the weekend to do a few things other than saying mass. We had a Communion service the rest of the week. So, in the morning, I made some very important phone calls, one of which was to the committee representative. As you recall, we've been working on that on the Steering Committee. I talked to the person, and I asked for some coaching because after mass today, I only have about five minutes to gather your thoughts and opinions in person. I did not want to mislead you, so I asked him to give me some coaching on how to go about doing this. I didn't want to embarrass myself. So, that was one thing; another thing was more phone calls and a few meetings. I was planning to visit two members, one from our parish and one on request, in the afternoon. So, yesterday I made a circle. One of them is staying at a rehab in Southern Indiana. I really made a circle going 265 all the way to Southern Indiana. (Laughing) Then, on the way back, I circled back to I-64 at a place where I was on the way home. One of our permanent deacons, as you may know, the deacons are gathering at St. Meinrad after the priests this weekend. One of them called me because he is on call this week, even though he's on his way to St. Meinrad. He asked me to visit a parishioner, a Catholic from Baptist East. So, in the end, I really made a circle like this (more laughing), and then back. But as you know, I was thinking about why I am doing this. It has really turned out that every time I do this, and you know, many of our parishioners are doing the same thing, extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers, they do the same in a similar fashion. But I said to myself, every time I go to a rehab medical facility, hospital, or homebound, I do not go there or be present on my own. I am sent out by all of us here as a parish. As a worshipping community, we, like all our extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers, take Communion to the homebound. They do this in a similar fashion. Some of the things they don't do are anointing. The church really preserves that for the ordained priests, but still, we are doing extraordinary things for people who need God's grace and mercy.

I often believe, and I said before in my homilies, that we all agree that the Eucharist is the center of our life here on earth. But how does one look at the Eucharist as the center? Some think of the Eucharist as, after all that we do, we come to the Eucharist. I, on the other hand, think that the Eucharist is when we participate in this mystery. What do we do about our participation? It is more important for us to participate. I believe, just like the gospel today, verse 6:57, and the other two verses I quoted, Jesus really was sent out by God. He was not alone. He journeyed to do God's work because He knew and believed that God was always with Him. When I go out and when our extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers go out to the homebound and other places, they do not represent themselves.

They represent Epiphany Catholic Church, which you sent me. Because we believe in this mystery. We believe that we worship God. When one is sent out, one does not do the work alone, but the work of the whole community. That is why we are Eucharistic disciples, and more so, Eucharistic apostles. If this Feast of Solemnity makes any sense to us, from now on and until the end of the liturgical calendar, the church preserves this weekend to celebrate the Body and Blood of Christ. Not only for us today, but for the whole liturgical year, year in and year out. As you see, I spare these extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers, myself, and other priests. When I go to the hospital, I often bring three things: these picks, the little jar of oil, and the little handbook on the Sacrament of the Anointing and pastoral care for the sick. Sometimes I use all three. Sometimes I use only one or two. Sometimes I don't even use one depending on the circumstance. But every time, if Jesus makes any presence in my life, in what I do, and in the work of our extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers, it is because we are sent to do the work of God. Because the fact that we are sent, we are apostles in the name of the parish which we are part of, in the name of the Epiphany Catholic Church, in the name of this worshiping community, and in the name of the living Jesus and the living God.