

Feed on the Body and Blood of Christ

"Is anything too difficult for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14)

The Sunday after Trinity is observed in some Christian traditions as Corpus Christie. It is the occasion set aside to focus on Jesus as food from heaven to nourish the soul for eternal life. Jesus describes this food in St John 4:32 as follows: "But he said to them, I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Jesus suggests food is an essential part of the life of the people of faith. On the one hand this food is available and accessible to the people of God. On the other hand there is food to which Jesus has access but which those who believe in him are not aware of. Corpus Christie is an opportunity to assess the nature of this food and determine how it applies to life on a daily basis. Jesus' food points to the theme selected for today: "Feed on the Body and Blood of Christ." Jesus' mission is to give life and he has the food needed to sustain that life in us.

"Is anything too hard for the Lord to do?" this is the question raised by one of the three visitors to Abraham. This question is useful in reflecting on the theme feed on the Body and Blood of Christ. To appreciate any message in the theme there is

the need to unpack the meaning of the question raised by Abraham's visitor. The question is raised due to Sarah's cynical response to the message that she will become pregnant in her eighties. The sheer preposterous and pedantic nature of the statement made Sarah laugh within herself. No sooner than she did so than the visitor sensed the negative energy from Sarah. Sarah is inside the tent and the visitor is on the outside. Yet, the visitor senses the change in the vibes in the environment. Abraham created an environment of hospitality and hope and Sarah sought to change the energy with negative thought and naughty feelings. The visitor called out Sarah's negative energy and Sarah lied about it as she probably thought the statement was ridiculous. Yet, for the writer of the book of Genesis, God's willingness to visit and eat with the family is not different from God enabling Sarah to become pregnant. "Is anything too hard for the Lord to do?"

The hospitality described in the reading from the book of Genesis is picked up in the theme feed on the Body and Blood of Christ. What does it mean to feed? Two things come to mind. First, to feed is to receive a meal from someone. Abraham and Sarah's guests received the meal from them. Abraham and Sarah fed their guests. In other words they fed them or provided for them as a means of extending hospitality.

A second way to understand feed is to receive a meal from another person. A child for example receives a meal or drink prepared by a parent or another adult. Similarly, a patient who is unable to feed her or himself receives a meal from another person because she/he is unable to feed her/himself. This approach to feeding is described in Psalm 23 as follows: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies" (Psalm 23:5). This suggests the Psalmist is open to receiving nourishment or being fed by God in the midst of enemies since God provides in good and bad times.

Feeding on the Body and Blood of Christ is useful in good and bad times. The Body of Christ is the divine food provided by God for all those united with Christ in Baptism. This Body of Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, lived in Palestine, was crucified, buried and rose after three days. This same Body ascended into heaven from where he feeds us with the divine self. This feeding is a provision from God and the people of God receives it in faith. This feeding is possible in good and bad times as God's nourishment is able to sustain us at all times. This is the reason when people are sick, they are travelling, they receive a promotion, they are preparing for surgery, and they are celebrating a birthday. Whatever the occasion

the feeding on the Body of Christ is an opportunity for nourishing the souls as it travels back to God.

Feeding on the Blood of Christ means life and is symbolic of the life poured out by Christ on Calvary. Of this life one song writer says,

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

That is, the gift of life at Calvary is of such it demands everything that we have or will ever possess. In a world and society when life seems so cheap it is time to assert the goodness and value of life. Blood means life. The Blood of Jesus announces life even in situations in which life is treated with disrespect and is disregarded. Demonstrations all over the world are in favour of justice. At the time Jesus lived in Palestine he stood on the side of these whose life was threatened by the vulnerabilities of life. Lepers, widows, orphans, the blind, the sick, the hopeless and the homeless found new meaning to life in and through him. The Blood of Christ, like the Body of Christ means life, hope and happiness for all people. These are matters of justice.

What then is the take away message from our theme today? I like the reference to justice in the Collect we prayed earlier. Let's listen again to what we prayed. "Keep, O Lord, your household the Church in your steadfast faith and love, that through your grace we may proclaim your truth with boldness, and minister your justice with compassion..." Showing justice through compassion is the consequence of feeding on the Body and Blood of Christ. This Body and Blood which we receive in the Eucharist is a means of grace. We receive this grace as life from God and we are invited to share this life with all those we meet.

What then has been your experience of the Eucharist? What is your understanding of the Body and blood of Christ? What does it mean to you to come to the Eucharist? Now that you have not been feeding on this means of grace for the past few weeks, how does it feel? Your answers to these questions points to the meaning of the Body and Blood of Christ to you. At the same time, whatever you and I make of the meaning of feeding on the Body and Blood of Christ let it be an occasion to stand up for that which is right as your become an advocate for justice. Abraham's visitors came to him as an act of justice. Jesus healed people and provided food for them as acts of justice. We too are called to be agents of justice. We are to stand up and stand out for the poor and those in

need. These were the foundation of the early church and they are constant reminders that God provides for all people, especially those who are in need. Let Jesus feed you with his Body and Blood as together we renew our commitment to share this Body and Blood with all who are in need. In the name...