

## ~From the Administrator~

Dear Parish Family,

June 6, 2010

Today is the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. This feast honors the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in Eucharist. It is traditionally on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, as an association with the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper on Holy Thursday; and that is the first free Thursday after Easter. In most dioceses of the United States, Corpus Christi is transferred to the Sunday after Trinity Sunday. At the end of the Mass, it is customary to have a Procession of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

At the Saturday 5:00 pm Mass, our sixth graders will graduate from St. Joseph the Worker School. Congratulations to the best sixth grade class ever!

On Thursday, I was given a beautiful autographed photo of all the students in our school as a birthday, anniversary, going away present. It is on display in the gathering area. I am so proud of our students, and so grateful for their devotion to this young priest.

Yesterday was the Memorial of St. Boniface and is the anniversary of my ordination to the Priesthood. St. Boniface worked tirelessly to convert the areas of central Europe to the Faith. He cut down the Holy Oak Tree dedicated to the Norse God Thor, and built a chapel from the wood on the site of what is now the cathedral of Frizlar. At his request, he went as a missionary to the Frisians at the ripe age of 75. He and his party were attacked and killed for the "treasure" in his luggage; which his attackers soon discovered to their own dismay were relics of saints and books for the liturgy.

I've been given 20 free tickets to the July 3 Country Music Show in Harrison. It runs from 3 - 7 pm. If you are interested, please stop by the office.

Please continue to pray for our incoming pastor Fr. Patrick Jankowiak as we quickly approach the transition. Also, please continue to pray for me!

Let us always pray for each other. God bless you!

*Fr. David*

## Word of the Week: RELIC

re·lic [re lik] /rɛ' lik/ *noun*

An object, notably part of the body or clothes, remaining as a memorial of a saint. There are three types or classes of relics:

*First Class Relics:* Remains of the bodies of saints, for example bones, hair, or blood, as well as the instruments of Our Lord's Passion.

*Second Class Relics:* Articles associated with the lives of the saints, such as clothing, books, and anything else the saints used in life.

*Third Class Relics:* Items, usually small pieces of cloth, which have come into contact with First or Second Class Relics.

[Origins: from O.Fr. *relique* (11c.), from Latin *reliquiæ* (pl.) "remains of a martyr," from Latin, "remains, remnants," from *re-* "back" + *linquere* "to leave". Old English (early 14c.) "remains, ruins" *reliquias*, directly from Latin.]

# EARLY HISTORY OF EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Belief in the real, physical presence of Christ in the Eucharist grew out of the teaching of the evangelists and St. Paul. They made it plain to the apostolic Church that the Eucharistic elements were literally Jesus Christ continuing His saving mission among men.

John and Paul were especially plain. The skepticism of Christ's followers, when He preached the reality of His Body and Blood as food and drink, made John record the fact that "many of His disciples withdrew and no longer went about with Him." Seeing this, Jesus asked the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave me?" Simon Peter did not understand any more than those who left Christ, but his loyalty was more firm. "Lord," he answered, "to whom shall we go?" (John 6:66-68).

Paul's letter to the Corinthians rebuked them for making the Agape, which should have been a beautiful sign of unity, into an occasion of discord. He reminded them that the Eucharist is no ordinary food. It is actually the Body and Blood of Christ according to "the tradition which I handed on to you that came to me from the Lord Himself" (I Corinthians II: 23-26).

At the turn of the first century, Ignatius of Antioch, on his way to martyrdom in Rome, had to warn the Christians not to be taken in by the Gnostics--a good modern term would be "visionaries," who denied the Real Presence. Ignatius said these people abstained from the Eucharist because they did not accept what true Christians believe, that in the Eucharist is the same Jesus Christ Who lived and died and rose from the dead for our salvation.

Under the impact of this faith, the early hermits reserved the Eucharist in their cells. From at least the middle of the third century, it was very general for the solitaries in the East, especially in Palestine and Egypt, to preserve the consecrated elements in the caves or hermitages where they lived.

The immediate purpose of this reservation was to enable the hermits to give themselves Holy Communion. But these hermits were too conscious of what the Real Presence was not to treat it with great reverence and not to think of it as serving a sacred purpose by just being nearby.

Not only did they have the Sacrament with them in their cells, but they carried it on their persons when they moved from one place to another.

The life of St. Comgall (died 601) tells how on one occasion he was attacked by heathen Pietists while working in a field. On seeing the pyx worn around his neck, the attackers did not dare touch him for fear of some retaliation since they surmised (as the narrator

says) that Comgall was carrying his God. The saint was so moved by the experience that he exclaimed, "Lord, you are my strength, my refuge, and my Redeemer."

As early as the Council of Nicea (325) we know that the Eucharist began to be reserved in the churches of monasteries and convents. Again, the immediate reason for this reservation was for the sick and the dying. But naturally its sacred character was recognized and the place of reservation was set off from profane usage.

From the beginning of community life, therefore, the Blessed Sacrament became an integral part of the church structure of a monastery. A bewildering variety of names was used to identify the place of reservation. *Pastoforium, diakonikon, secretarium, prothesis* are the most common. As far as we can tell, the Eucharist was originally kept in a special room, just off the sanctuary but separated from the church where Mass was offered.

Certainly by the 800's, the Blessed Sacrament was kept within the monastic church itself, close to the altar. In fact, we have a poem from the year 802, telling of a pyx containing the Sacred Species reserved on the high altar of the abbey church at Lindisfarne in England.

The practice of reserving the Eucharist in religious houses was so universal that there is no evidence to the contrary even before the year 1000. In fact, numerous regulations are extant which provided for protection of the sacred elements, as the wording went, "from profanation by mice and impious men." The species were to be kept under lock and key and sometimes in a receptacle raised high enough to be out of easy reach of profaning hands.

It is interesting to note that one of the first unmistakable references to reserving the Blessed Sacrament is found in a life of St. Basil (who died in 379). Basil is said to have divided the Eucharistic Bread into three parts when he celebrated Mass in the monastery. One part he consumed, the second part he gave to the monks, and the third he placed in a golden dove suspended over the altar.

This would suggest that, though we have less access to Oriental sources, the Eastern monasteries were centuries ahead of the West in reserving the Eucharistic elements in the monastic church proper and not only in a separate place.

Among the treasures of Monte Cassino that seem to have been destroyed during the Second World War were two small ancient tabernacles, one of gold and the other of silver. They were gifts of Pope Victor III (died 1087), who had been abbot at Monte Cassino.

*From: "History of Eucharistic Adoration," by Fr. John A. Hardon*