The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 9:11b-17): Jesus spoke to the crowds about the kingdom of God, and he healed those who needed to be cured. As the day was drawing to a close, the Twelve approached him and said, "Dismiss the crowd so that they can go to the surrounding villages and farms and find lodging and provisions; for we are in a deserted place here." He said to them, "Give them some food yourselves." They replied, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have, unless we ourselves go and buy food for all these people." Now the men there numbered about five thousand. Then he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty." They did so and made them all sit down. Then taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. They all ate and were satisfied. And when the leftover fragments were picked up, they filled twelve wicker baskets.

"Give them some food yourselves."

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today is the greatest day for a Christian's heart, because, after celebrating the institution of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday, the Church now is trying to exalt this revered Sacrament, to make us adore it without limit. “Quantum potes, tantum aude...” (dare to do your best): This is the invitation St. Thomas Aquinas makes us in a wonderful hymn of praise to the Eucharist. And, in a most admirable way, this invitation sums up what our heart's feelings should be before Christ's true presence in the Eucharist. To reciprocate such a humble, hidden, and so impressive gift, whatever we can do will never be enough. The Almighty Creator of Heaven and Earth hides under the Sacramental species and offers himself to us as the food that feeds our souls. He is bread of angels and food of wayfarers. And it is the bread of life we are being abundantly given, just as the bread, to feed and strengthen those following him, was miraculously multiplied and distributed without any measure: “They all ate and were satisfied. And when the leftover fragments were picked up, they filled twelve wicker baskets” (Lk 9:17).

In front of this overabundance of love our reaction can never be stingy. An attentive and deep gaze of faith to this Divine Sacrament, must necessarily give way to a grateful prayer and to a passionate heart. In

his sermons, St. Josemaria Escrivá used to repeat the words a certain venerable bishop addressed to the priests he had just ordained: “Treat him well for me, treat him well!”

A quick examination of conscience will help us realize what we must do to treat Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament more delicately: the cleanliness of our soul —it must always be in grace to receive him—, the correctness of what we wear —as a sign of love and reverence—, the frequency with which we come closer to receive him, the number of times we visit him in the Tabernacle... Our attentions with our Lord in the Eucharist should be countless. Let us fight to receive and treat Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with the purity, humility and devotion of his Blessed Mother, with the spirit and the fervor of the saints.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Now when the day was going down, he refreshes the multitudes, that is, as the end of the world approaches, or when the Sun of righteousness sets for us.” (Saint Bede the Venerable)

- “On this day of the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, we want to recognize and celebrate Christ present among us. And that's why we take to the streets, to manifest our faith to the world, to bear witness, and to reach everyone with the mystery of Christ's Presence.” (Leo XIV)

- “The miracles of the multiplication of the loaves, when the Lord says the blessing, breaks and distributes the loaves through his disciples to feed the multitude, prefigure the superabundance of this unique bread of his Eucharist.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 1335)