***Weekend Homily***

***Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ (A)***

***June 18, 2017***

**Throughout history God has worked some pretty impressive miracles. He has done so to demonstrate his power and presence in our lives---and to remind us that we can always count on him to care for us and provide for our needs---no matter how desperate or impossible our life situation may seem.**

**We have a pretty dramatic example of that in the story of the Hebrew People in the O.T. One incident in particular came to mind as I worked on today’s homily. It happened shortly after the Hebrews managed to win their freedom from slavery in Egypt and were led by Moses into the Sinai Desert on their way to the Promised Land.**

**Now the Sinai Desert is a rather forbidding and barren place without much vegetation. So it wasn’t long before the food reserves began to run low. That’s when the troubles started.**

**The people, angry and afraid and hungry turned on Moses asking “Why did you lead us into this awful desert to die of starvation. If you had left us in Egypt at least we would have had enough to eat!”**

**Poor Moses--- realizing that things were getting out of control--- turned to God in prayer for guidance and help. And God’s response was truly spectacular. He answered the prayer of Moses by providing the people with manna, “bread from heaven.”**

**It appeared with the morning dew in the form of a crust-like substance which the people gathered up and used as their food for the day. This manna, this gift from God literally rescued the Hebrew People from starvation!**

**In the gospel for today’s Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ--- the Lord speaks to us of an infinitely more spectacular and miraculous food we have received from the hands of God--- the gift of his own sacred body and blood in the Eucharist. He says to us:**

***“I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.***

***Amen, Amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.”***

**There is no doubt about it---the most spectacular and stunning and sacred gift Christ has given to us as his disciples and his church, is the gift of his most holy body and blood in the Eucharist.**

**There is nothing more central to our Catholic Faith than our belief in the Eucharist and here is what we believe about it. We believe that through the power of the Holy Spirit and the words of consecration spoken by the priest---the bread and the wine at Mass are mircleously transformed into the body and blood of the Lord.**

**We believe that when we receive communion, we are literally and truly receiving Jesus himself---the Son of God, the very same person that was born of Mary, who once walked this earth, who suffered and died for our salvation and rose from the dead and is now seated in glory at the right hand of the Father. We believe it is this very same Lord who comes to us in communion.**

**This has been the faith of the church from the first days of the church. Simply put we believe Christ is the host and Christ is the wine and when we receive him in communion we are receiving our God and Savior with whom we are destined to spend all eternity.**

**On this Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ we are being reminded that while God has worked many miracles throughout history, none has been greater or more spectacular than the miracle that happens here on our altar---- every time we gather as a parish to celebrate Mass in the Lord’s memory as he has commanded us.**

**I would like to end my homily this morning with a quote from St. Justin who lived in the year 150 A.D. (about 100 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus). Referring to the bread and wine at Mass St. Justin writes “We do not receive these things as ordinary food or ordinary drink but as the very body and blood of Christ our Savior!”**

**That was the faith of the Church at the time of Justin, and it’s the faith of the Church today.**