



The Eucharist is the bread of sinners not a reward of saints

Pope Francis celebrated the Solemnity of Corpus Christi inviting the faithful to embrace the Lord's gift of the Eucharist and to make a gift of our lives too.

By Linda Bordoni

On the day Christians in Italy and in other countries celebrate the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, *Corpus Christi*, [Pope Francis reflected on the gift of the sacrament of the Eucharist](#) and invited believers to make their own lives gifts, just as Jesus did.

Speaking to pilgrims gathered in St Peter's Square for the Sunday Angelus and to all those following through the media, the Pope reflected on the narrative of the last Supper as recounted in the Gospel of Mark (Mk 14:12-16, 22-26).

"The words and gestures of the Lord touch our hearts: He takes the bread in his hands, pronounces the blessing, breaks it and offers it to the disciples, saying: *Take; this is my body*", the Pope said.

With great simplicity, he continued, Jesus gives us the greatest sacrament in a humble gesture of giving and of sharing.

The greatest thing is to serve

Explaining that at the culmination of his life, Jesus "does not distribute an abundance of bread to feed the crowds, but he breaks himself at the Passover

supper with the disciples,” and He shows us that that the aim of life lies in self-giving, that “the greatest thing is to serve.”

Reflecting on how we find the greatness of God in a piece of bread, “in a fragility that overflows with love and sharing, the Pope highlighted the meaning of the word *Fragility* explaining that at the last supper “Jesus becomes fragile like the bread that is broken and crumbled. But his strength lies precisely therein.”

The strength of love that is gives life

“In the Eucharist fragility is strength: the strength of the love that becomes small so as to be welcomed and not feared; the strength of the love that is broken and shared so as to nourish and give life; the strength of the love that is split apart so as to join us in unity,” he said.

Pope Francis went on to speak also of another strength that stands out in the fragility of the Eucharist: “the strength to love those who make mistakes.”

Noting that “It is *on the night he is betrayed* that Jesus gives us the Bread of Life,” he reflected on the fact that “He gives us the greatest gift while in his heart he feels the deepest abyss: the disciple who eats with Him, who dips the morsel in the same plate, is betraying Him.”

Responding to evil with good

Notwithstanding the suffering caused by betrayal, the Pope said, Jesus reacts to the evil with a greater good: “He responds to Judas’ ‘no’ with the ‘yes’ of mercy. He does not punish the sinner, but rather gives His life for him.”

“When we receive the Eucharist,” the Holy Father explained, “Jesus does the same with us: he knows us; he knows that we are sinners and we make many mistakes, but he does not give up joining his life to ours.”

Describing the Eucharist, not as the reward of saints, but as *the Bread of sinners*, the Pope said that each time we receive the Bread of Life, the Lord comes to give new meaning to our fragilities.

Urging the faithful never to refrain from sharing their fragilities with Lord, he reminded them that His mercy is not afraid of our miseries.

“And above all he heals us with love from those fragilities that we cannot heal on our own: that of feeling resentment toward those who have hurt us; that of distancing ourselves from others and closing off within ourselves; that of feeling sorry for ourselves and lamenting without finding peace,” he said.

The Eucharist joins us with Jesus

The Eucharist, the Pope said, “heals because it joins with Jesus: it makes us assimilate his way of living, his ability to be broken up and given to brothers and sisters, to respond to evil with good.”

Concluding his catechesis, Pope Francis said the Lord “gives us the courage to go outside of ourselves and bend down with love toward the fragility of others. As God does with us: This is the logic of the Eucharist: we receive Jesus who loves us and heals our fragilities in order to love others and help them in their fragilities. And he invoked the Blessed Virgin to help us to embrace the gift of the Eucharist and to make a gift of our life too.