

**Homily for May 29, 2005  
Most Holy Body and Blood (A)**

**By Father Charles Bowes**

**Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a**

**Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20**

**1 Corinthians 10:16-17**

**John 6:51-58**

## *We crave God. And God responds by feeding us through one another.*

There is a hunger that only God can satisfy. It is not the hunger for food, however, that I'm talking about. In fact, if the hunger for food is not met, there is very little chance that God can be found or even be sought out, thus sparking Mahatma Gandhi's observation, "If God were to come to earth today, God would come in the form of bread." Do we experience that hunger? Have we ever known a primal craving for God beyond food?

I am convinced that the craving for God is more common than one might think. I believe that the frantic search for meaning or acceptance that consumes so many people today is, at its heart, a search for God. Furthermore, I think that there are many people who are very much like the Jewish crowds in today's Gospel. They are good people who are not prepared to accept some of the claims made by Jesus. I simply suggest that they are searching for God. Jesus, on the other hand, claimed, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life." This is a bold claim indeed!

Today's readings are filled with bold claims: Moses

claims that we need God's word as much as we need food; Jesus claims that we must feed on his body and blood if we would have life; Saint Paul claims that when we partake of the one loaf, we are intimately joined to one another. We need faith to accept these claims. We may all experience genuine craving for fulfillment, but only faith can help us recognize what will satisfy that craving.

The body and blood of the risen Christ possess extraordinary features. When we eat ordinary food, we turn it into our own being. But when we eat his glorified body and drink his glorified blood, we are transformed into it. We remain in him, and he remains in us. A bond is forged that not only grants us life, but endures into eternal life. Furthermore, we are bound together with all others who partake of this food and drink.

St. Augustine said it brilliantly: "If you receive well, you are what you have received. Since you are the Body of Christ and his members, it is your mystery that you receive. You hear the words, 'the Body of Christ,' and you answer, 'Amen.' Be, therefore, members of Christ that your 'amen' may be true. Be what you see and receive what you already are."

This Holy Communion makes us into more than a group of individuals, but forms us into a body, the

Body of Christ responsible for one another and for others. As an expression of our unity in the one bread and one cup, our bishops have asked that we become more sensitive to those with physical challenges.

Among those in our midst are some physically challenged with diminishing eyesight. As a step toward providing for them, the family of Matt Dolan (who was himself a person physically challenged) is providing in Matt's memory these magnifying devices that are located now in baskets atop the song book cabinets in the front and rear of our church. They are lightweight and can be used easily to magnify the pages of our songbooks. You are welcome to make use of these and return them to the baskets afterwards. If you know of folks who are physically challenged in eyesight and would benefit from these, feel free to tell them about this opportunity. And please use the notes from the pew to let us know if there are other folks physically challenged and in need of help.

There are many members of this Body of Christ with all sorts of gifts. Sometimes, the only gift we can give another is our need – which puts us very close to God...since that is what it means to be a child of God and not self-sufficient, and calls forth openness on the part of others to respond to those needs. In this way, we truly become what we receive in Holy Communion, one Body formed anew and nourishing one another with what we, ourselves, have received.

**We crave God. And God responds by feeding us through one another.**