



## The Catholic Parish of Corpus Christi

### *What's All This Talk About "Adoration" and the "Blessed Sacrament" I Am Hearing About?*

#### **Part 3 "... when does bread become The Blessed Body and wine become The Precious Blood?"**

Around the turn of the thirteenth century, a necessary liturgical innovation was introduced to the Mass in response to the errors of certain churchmen who believed that the bread and wine were not completely changed into the Sacred Body and Precious Blood of Christ until *after* the words "This is My Body...this is My Blood" were *completed* over *both* the bread and wine. In response, the Church at Paris mandated that the Sacred Body be elevated for the adoration of the faithful even before the words of consecration were spoken over the chalice.

Remember that, according to ancient tradition, Mass was celebrated with the *entire* congregation facing East—both the priest and the people. Thus, in order for the faithful to see the Blessed Sacrament, the priest would then need to lift the Sacred Body and Precious Blood high, especially over his head, so that the assembly behind him would be able to see and to salute Jesus who is present.

Eventually, this aspect of the Eucharist gained its own liturgical feast, thanks in part to St Thomas Aquinas.

On account of a Eucharistic miracle which took place in Orvieto, Italy, in 1263 (which can be seen to this day and which our group of Pilgrims to Rome will be able to see this coming June!), Pope Urban IV ordered that a new feast be instituted to honour the Blessed Sacrament under the aspect of 'Real Presence.' True, the Church already celebrates Holy Thursday—the feast of the institution of the Eucharist—but that feast celebrates it under the aspect of the 'Sacrament of Charity' and in view of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday.

The new feast of **Corpus Christi** ('the Body of Christ') or **Corpus Domini** ('the Body of the Lord') sought to imbue the faithful with worshipful gratitude for the true, real, and substantial Presence of Our Lord's Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Blessed Sacrament.

It was St Thomas Aquinas, in fact, who composed the hymns of the feast, all of which contain a rich and dense Eucharistic doctrine. *Pange, lingua, gloriosi*, "Sing, My Tongue, of The Saviour's glory"; *Sacris solemniis*, "To These Our Solemn Sacred Rites"; *Verbum supernum prodiens*, "The Word of God Proceeding Forth"; *Lauda, Sion, Salvatorem*, "Zion, to Your Saviour Sing"; *Adoro te devote*, "Godhead Here in Hiding." The last one, technically, is a prayer set to music, and entirely separate from the liturgy of Corpus Christi, contains the lovely line, "Seeing, touching, tasting, are in Thee deceived / How says trusty hearing? That shall be believed / What God's own Son has told me, take for Truth I do / Truth Himself speaks truly, or there's nothing true." Here we are reminded of the trustworthiness of Jesus who said, "This *is* My Body...this *is* My Blood." And if Jesus, who is Truth Himself, did not mean what He said, then nothing else is trustworthy. Adoring Him in His Sacrament is how we place our trust in the words of Jesus giving Him the worship that is rightly owed to Him.

**... to be continued**