

HOMILY FOR THE HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS 2022  
(With celebration of First Holy Communion for the children of our parish)

Today, I feel like we have come to a marriage. And, I have to say, we don't get too many of them in the church these days.

But, nevertheless, there is no greater delight for the Church than when one comes to receive Holy Communion for the first time. It may not have the same sense of delight for each of these children but, it is our hope that they will grow into a deeper meaning of the Eucharist. We, who, having received our first Holy Communion, continue to grow into a deeper understanding of the Eucharist. Just as with marriage.

For, as we will soon acknowledge when I ask the children to come forward and stand with us in the community as we profess our Baptismal faith, we remember the beginning of a loving relationship with God.

When we came into being, God chose to bring us to Baptism. God chose us to love us because God made each and every one of us someone whom God wished to know more and more. From that moment, God intended us to receive Holy Communion.

At our Confirmation, we had the opportunity to publicly commit ourselves to love the one who loves us, much like becoming engaged.

Again, young people, you have much more to discover about this. For now, for you, it is a little like an arranged marriage because your parents or guardians have made this commitment to this moment. They brought you to Baptism to commit your life to God. They did this in good faith because they wanted you to be happy and fulfilled. So, today, we acknowledge you parents and guardians for what you have wanted for your children – a relationship with God.

Therefore, tonight, we celebrate the final act of initiation for these children's full participation in the relationship the Church has as the Bride of Christ. They were made one with Jesus through Baptism. Tonight, in the receiving of the Body of Christ, they physically enter into an ongoing commitment to this relationship of sacrificial love – the very way in which we speak of marriage.

To our children who come for your First Holy Communion, we hope that this Sacrament will guide you as you make your journey to discover more and more what God wants you to become.

In the first reading, we heard of Melchizedek of Salem – later called, Jeru-Salem. He showed the sign that God was committed to Abram, our father of the faith, with the gift of bread and wine.

The second reading has shown the night when Jesus sat with his disciples at the Last Supper in Jeru-Salem where, as the Priest of God and, king Jesus showed his commitment to them by providing bread and wine. We acknowledge when we pray our thanks for the gifts of bread and wine at the altar. Of course, when Jesus present bread and wine, he also presented himself.

Yes, children, young and old, we still have so much more to understand and grow into but, such is love. It has no final word. It is always something which has so much more to discover in the many changes of life. Sacramental marriage acknowledges that and, the Eucharist is our becoming one with Jesus, as a man and woman become one in marriage.

What does this oneness with Christ look like? Well, the Gospel reveals how the disciples, the ones whom Jesus chose, asked them to help him in his work. Jesus asked them to be what he came to be – those who work to meet the needs of others. It's this companionship with Jesus that we celebrate in the Eucharist.

Last weekend, in our prayer of the faithful, we prayed for you, young people, who were preparing for your first Holy Communion and we prayed that you would have a love for the Eucharist. It is the hope of all of us who receive Holy Communion that it will be a sign of our love for Jesus, who loves us.