

Angelus: Solemnity of 'Corpus Christi', 14 June

Deepening the value and importance of the priestly mission

On Sunday, 14 June – in some countries, including Italy, the Solemnity of Corpus Christi – before praying the Angelus with the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square, the Holy Father commented on the "feast of the Eucharist". He also recalled that the Year for Priests would begin on Friday, 19 May. The following is a translation of the Pope's Reflection, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Corpus Christi, the feast of the Eucharist in which the Sacrament of the Body of the Lord is solemnly carried in procession, is being celebrated today in various countries, including Italy. What does this feastday mean to us?

It does not make us think of the liturgical aspect alone; actually *Corpus Christi* is a day that involves the cosmic dimension, the heavens and the earth. It calls to mind first of all – at least in our hemisphere – this season which is so beautiful and fragrant, in which Spring is already turning into Summer, the sun is high in the sky and the wheat is ripening in the fields.

The Church's feasts – like the Jewish feasts – are associated with the phases

of the solar year, the sowing and the reaping.

This is particularly evident in today's Solemnity, at the heart of which is the sign of bread, a fruit of the earth and of Heaven. The Eucharistic Bread is thus a visible sign of the One in whom Heaven and earth, God and man, became one. And this shows that the relationship with the seasons is not something merely external to the liturgical year.

The Solemnity of *Corpus Christi* is closely linked to Easter and Pentecost: the death and Resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit are its premises.

Furthermore, it is directly linked to the Feast of the Trinity that was celebrated last Sunday. It is only because God himself is relationship that there can be a relationship with him; and only because he is love can he love and be loved. Thus, *Corpus Christi* is a manifestation of God, an attestation that God is love.

This feast speaks to us in a unique and special way of divine love, of



what it is and of what it does. It tells us, for example, that it is regenerated in self-giving, that it is received in self-giving, that it is never lacking nor can it be consumed – as a hymn by St

Thomas Aquinas sings: "*nec sumptus consumitur*".

Love transforms all things and we therefore understand that the centre of today's Feast of *Corpus Christi* is the mystery of transubstantiation, a sign of Jesus Christ who transforms the world. Looking at him and worshipping him, we say: "yes, love exists and because it exists things can change for the better and we can hope".

It is hope that comes from Christ's love which gives us the strength to live and to deal with difficulties. For this reason let us sing as we carry the Most Holy Sacrament in procession; let us sing and praise God who revealed himself concealing himself in the sign of the Bread broken. We are all in need of this Bread, as the journey to freedom, justice and peace is long and difficult.

We can imagine with what great faith and love Our Lady must have received and adored the Blessed Eucharist in her heart! For her it must have been every time like reliving the whole mystery of her Son Jesus: from his Conception to his Resurrection. The "Woman of the Eucharist", my venerable and beloved Predecessor John Paul II called her. Let us learn from her to renew our communion with the Body of Christ ceaselessly so that we may love one another as he loved us.

After the Angelus the Pope said:

The United Nations Conference on the economic and financial crisis and on its impact on development is to be held from 24 to 26 of this month in New York. I invoke the spirit of wisdom and human solidarity upon the participants in the Conference, as well as on those responsible for public affairs and for the future of the planet, so that the current crisis may be



On the Body and Blood of Christ

Free this world from the poison of hatred

On Thursday, 11 June, the Solemnity of *Corpus Christi*, the Pope presided at Mass outside the Basilica of St John Lateran and then led the traditional Eucharistic procession. Featured inside: the Pope's Homily.

PAGES 6-7

Address to members of the 'Centesimus Annus' Foundation

Achieving a truly free and supportive human coexistence

Pope speaks on soon-to-be released social Encyclical

On Saturday, 13 June, the Holy Father spoke to the members of the 'Centesimus Annus – Pro Pontifice' Foundation on the occasion of their annual congress. During his Address, the Pope commented on his upcoming Encyclical, which will "highlight what for Christians are the objectives to pursue and the values to promote and to defend tirelessly, if we are to achieve a truly free and supportive human coexistence".



PAGE 5

Benedict XVI's General Audience

John Scotus Erigena

On Wednesday, 10 June, the Holy Father spoke on John Scotus Erigena, "a noteworthy figure of the Christian West" who was influential in ninth-century France. Erigena maintained that because of Scripture, "our rational nature may be introduced to the secrets of authentic and pure contemplation of God".

PAGE 11

Robert Imbelli on perceiving Christ's real presence

The Eucharist: Christ's self-gift

"The Church makes the Eucharist and the Eucharist makes the Church". This week, Fr Robert Imbelli – Professor of Theology at Boston College – reflects on the Eucharist as the heart of liturgical life.

PAGE 8

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2