



Dear friends,

This Sunday 14 June, we celebrate the Feast of the Body and Blood of Jesus (Corpus Christi). The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) said of the Eucharist: "...it is the source and summit of all the Christian life." The Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Jesus, is the beginning of our week, and all our actions flow from nourishing ourselves through receiving the Body of Christ.

St Mother Teresa of Calcutta was given a reception by the Communist dictator of Albania, Enver Hoxha, who ruled Albania for forty years from 1945-1985. He imposed atheism as the official religion in 1967. The possession of a crucifix or bible often meant a ten-year prison term. Welcoming Mother Teresa in 1985, he stated that he appreciated her world-wide works of charity, and then added, 'but, I will not permit Christ to return to Albania while I am in charge.' In her reply while thanking the president for the reception Mother Teresa said: 'Mr President you are wrong. I have brought not only the love of Christ to my native land, but also the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist right into your presidential palace. I am allowed to carry Jesus in a sacred container during my visit to this Communist country where public worship is a crime. I keep Jesus in the consecrated host in my pocket. Jesus will surely return to this country very soon.' Communism collapsed in Albania in 1992 and Christians reopened their churches.

Famously known as the 'saint of the slums,' Mother Teresa often demonstrated the courage of her faith in the face of great adversity. Once asked by a journalist what kept her going, Mother Teresa replied: 'Receiving Jesus at Mass.' During the recent COVID19 pandemic, many Catholics have been unable to receive the Body of Jesus due to the possibility of contagion. While many people have appreciated the live-streaming of Masses at home, and thus have made a spiritual communion, many have said to me: "But Father, it's not the same." It could be that absence and hunger for the Eucharist which will help feed our desire to return to the celebration of Mass.

The tradition of God feeding his people has a long history which has its roots in the first reading today from the Book of Deuteronomy (Dt 8:2-3. 14-16), where Moses reminds the people who have journeyed with him through the desert saying: "... He humbled you, he made you feel hunger, he fed you with manna which neither you nor your fathers had known." Moses is urging the people when they reach the Promised Land, 'the land of milk and honey,' not to forget the God who supported them in times of need and want, and who formed them into one people.

In the Gospel of John (6:51-58), Jesus, is presented as the 'new' Moses. He is the one, who is leading the people through the desert away from sin and darkness to himself as the 'living bread which has come down from heaven.'(vs 52). Like Moses, Jesus too reminds the people of how God cared for their ancestors by feeding them with manna in the desert. But now, He, Jesus, is the true and living bread which has come from heaven to feed people here and now, to form them as one people, and, lead them into the Promised Land: the Kingdom of Heaven.

St Paul in his letter to the Corinthians further reminds the community that true unity is achieved by sharing in, and believing that the one bread and one cup, bring us into communion as the Body of Christ.

Only through our participation in the Eucharist are we too nourished as the people of Israel were in the desert, and in keeping with the command of Jesus to do this in memory of me, can we walk together as pilgrims toward the new and eternal Jerusalem, as Jesus says: 'anyone who eats this bread will live forever.'(vs 58).

[Fr Kelvin](#)