

**Homily – The Body and Blood of Christ (2018, B)  
by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS**

Throughout the Easter season, we began Mass with a water rite.  
We were sprinkled with baptismal water.  
Can you imagine what it would be like if, instead of using water,  
we got sprinkled with blood – like the Hebrews in today's first reading?  
Anyone who does laundry knows that dried blood stains  
are near impossible to get out.  
So at Eucharist, we are not sprinkled with the blood of Christ, we drink it.

Both gestures, eating and drinking, are deeply symbolic.  
Eating points to God's desire to feed us with what we need  
not only to survive, but to flourish.  
Drinking points to God's willingness to sacrifice all out of love for us.

Many of us here grew up at a time when our celebration of the sacraments  
had become downright puny.  
Baptism was celebrated in a near private ceremony of Sunday afternoons.  
The Sacrament of Penance was always a private thing  
between priest and penitent.  
Much of the Mass was prayed in silence  
and the priest had his back to the people.  
The only one who drank from the chalice in those days was priest.  
And a good Mass lasted not more than a half hour.  
In a sense, it was all so very austere ... and puny.

But in the 1960s, as the second Vatican Council unfolded,  
we began to recapture some things about liturgy  
that had been lost for centuries,  
some of its profound beauty, depth and power.  
What many consider one of the most significant statements of all 16 documents  
produced by the Council, was in paragraph 14 of the document on the Liturgy.  
It reads:  
(The liturgy) is the primary and indispensable source  
from which the faithful derive the true Christian spirit.  
That's why I spend so much time preparing for these celebrations  
and for preaching.

Here's just a bit of what we believe about this Eucharistic Liturgy:

Eucharist is a celebration of Jesus Christ's body, a body like our own,  
genetically coded, conditioned by birth, developing through life  
and undergoing the terrible relinquishment that is death.  
So many of us here are incarnating that relinquishment at this time.

At Eucharist, we literally take into our own bodies  
the body and blood of the Savior.  
This reenacts the incarnation: God once again takes human flesh.

In St. Paul's words, "We are the body of Christ."  
We don't replace Christ's historical body,  
we are not like his body,  
nor are we even his mystical body,  
we are his body; his flesh, blood, tangible, in history.

That's why some of us here gathered down at the corner of Elm and Monroe  
before Mass this morning to call attention to the fact  
that at our southern borders, children are being forcibly taken from their  
parents, because of the way our immigration laws are being interpreted and  
enforced.

That's why so many in this community are involved  
in the Poor People's Campaign.  
Focus this week: The Right to Health and a Healthy Planet:  
Ecological Devastation and Health Care

A beautiful hymn:  
"Christ has no body now but yours  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours  
Yours are the eyes with which He sees  
Yours are the feet with which He walks  
Yours are the hands with which He blesses all the world  
Yours are the hands."

Finally, a story about a Jewish boy named Mortakai  
When he was six, he refused to go to school.  
Mom took him, but as soon as she left he escaped and ran home.  
Parents tried everything from treats to bribes, to no avail.  
Finally they decided to talk to the Rabbi.  
Rabbi said, "Bring him to me."  
They brought him.  
Rabbi took Mortakai in his arms.  
Without saying a word, he just held him close his heart for a long time.  
From that day on Mortakai went to school.  
He even grew up to be a Rabbi.

Eucharist is God's way of holding us close to God's heart.  
We human beings need touch to survive.  
Eucharist is God's way of touching us.  
It is also God's invitation to us to hold one another in love.  
The bread we eat, the cup from which we drink, are that touch.