There's a very touching story you may have heard about a little girl who woke in the middle of the night. She was terrified that someone was hiding under her bed. Remember those nights? I do!

The little girl finally got the nerve to run to her parents room, shaking in fear. Her father gently picked her up and comforted her. Then he brought her back to her own room. He turned the light on to show her that no one was there. He assured her that God was there to protect her. But her response was, "But I want someone with skin."

You see, we have this tendency to think that Jesus came and stayed with us here for about 33 years. After that, he returned to heaven. He remains with us, but only in the form of bread and wine. We've used a term like "the mystical body of Christ" to explain that. And we keep wanting some skin.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus shakes people up with some very graphic images. He talks about eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

When people object to this graphic language, he doesn't soften it at all. He doesn't say "Oh, let me explain. Don't take this too literally. Don't worry, I'm not suggesting that you become cannibals."

In fact, not only does he NOT soften the language. He makes it even more graphic, some might say more crude. He talks about DEVOURING his flesh and blood. "My flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink." "The way you remain in me ... abide in me ... is that you eat my flesh and drink my blood."

So what is Jesus really getting at here? I think it helps to remember something St. Paul says to the Corinthian Church. "You are the body of Christ. Every one of you is a part of it." I think St. Paul means that quite literally. You and I give skin to God. That's what Jesus was saying to that crowd. That's what he's saying to us.

The bread and the wine that we pray over and then eat and drink are a solemn sacramental reminder pointing to this profound reality.
Christ did not come and spend 33 years here, then pull up stakes
to somehow go back to God
The INCARNATION is not a once in a lifetime happening.

The reality is that when we forgive, Christ is forgiving.
When we somehow reach out a hand in compassion, Christ is reaching out.
When we console a grieving person, Christ is consoling.
When we are anguished over someone’s suffering, the Lamb of God is bleeding.

In reality, every single person I encounter in life
is Christ in the skin.

In St. John’s Gospel, the word miracle is replaced with the word "SIGN."
A sign points to something other than itself, usually something deeper.
The signs we use in Eucharist are bread and wine.
They point to a much deeper reality.

Lady Wisdom, in today’s first reading says:
"Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed."
The food and the wine point to a deeper reality
just as the bread and wine at Mass point to a deeper reality.

The writer of the letter to the Ephesians urges that people
not get drunk on wine, but be filled with SPIRIT.
That points to a whole other level for understanding the meaning of Eucharist.

With all that in mind I leave you with a question to ponder.
Though in theory it may be justified,
do you think that not drinking from the cup at Mass
weakens the symbolism intended by Jesus?

It’s all a part of our
wanting someone with skin.
So, look around you.
That someone is right here.