

## From the Fathers

*On the feast of Corpus Christi*

*St Thomas Aquinas (1225-74)*

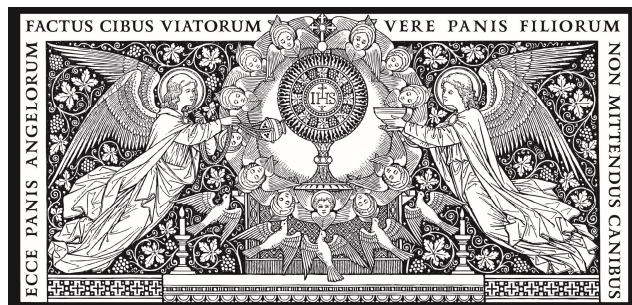
Since it was the will of God's only-begotten Son that men should share in his divinity, he assumed our nature in order that by becoming man he might make men gods. Moreover, when he took our flesh he dedicated the whole of its substance to our salvation. He offered his body to God the Father on the altar of the cross as a sacrifice for our reconciliation. But to ensure that the memory of so great a gift would abide with us for ever, he left his body as food and his blood as drink for the faithful to consume in the form of bread and wine. O precious and wonderful banquet, that brings us salvation and contains all sweetness! Under the old law it was the flesh of calves and goats that was offered, but here Christ himself, the true God, is set before us as our food. What could be more wonderful than this? No other sacrament has greater healing power; through it sins are purged away, virtues are increased, and the soul is enriched with an abundance of every spiritual gift. It is offered in the Church for the living and the dead, so that what was instituted for the salvation of all may be for the benefit of all. Yet, in the end, no one can fully express the sweetness of this sacrament, in which spiritual delight is tasted at its very source, and in which we renew the memory of that surpassing love for us which Christ revealed in his Passion.

## Elements of the Mass: Lauda Sion

This hymn is the traditional sequence used for the feast of Corpus Christi (the Body and Blood of Christ). A sequence expresses in poetry and singing the theology of the feast. Lauda Sion Salvatorem is rich in theology having been written by the great doctor of the Church, St Thomas Aquinas, in around 1264. The hymn speaks about how the Eucharist was instituted by Christ as gift to the Church. It goes on to express the theology of the Eucharist, that is to say that the bread and wine that are offered at the altar, once consecrated, become the Body and Blood of Christ. They are thus worthy of worship and adoration. This hymn is now often sung in procession on the feast with the additional chorus of 'Blessed and Praised by Jesus Christ in the most Holy Sacrament! Hosanna in Excelsis!' Because of its focus on the theology of the Eucharist this hymn is also sung on Maundy Thursday as the Blessed Sacrament is transferred to the Altar of Repose.

11<sup>th</sup> June 2023

## Corpus Christi



God gives. It is what he does. It is what he is - our God is the God of the gift. His giving is a manifestation of the super-abundance of his divine life, his infinite, inexhaustible plenitude. His giving is a manifestation of what he is, Love. Everything that is created is only so because of his free, unwarranted desire to give, and Salvation History reverberates with his giving: the Cosmos, the Covenants, the Passover, the Law, a People and their homeland flowing milk and honey, the Temple, the Prophets. But all these gifts are types and shadows of a greater gift to come, the incarnation of the Word-made-Flesh. The God-Man is God's full, final, perfect, and irrevocable self-gift. Throughout Salvation History, the God of the gift has been preparing for this richest expression of his abundance, the lavish gift of his presence and his very self and essence all-divine, in the person of Our Lord. Such a perfect gift now given will forever be with us. His self-gift abides with us perpetually in the Blessed Sacrament of his Body & Blood. Christ's incarnation continues amongst us in his Universal Church, in the sacraments of his Universal Church, and intensely so in the Blessed Sacrament. This makes the Holy Eucharist the Church's rarest treasure because it is the Sacrament of Christ's abiding presence, a Real Presence which perpetually summons up in us a remembrance of his suffering death and passion which - for love of our race and for its making forever new again - he willingly endured. A devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is a devotion to the gift of Christ's death-embracing love for you and his victory over all the powers that once delighted in your separation from God.