

HOMILY
CORPUS CHRISTI
June 7, 2026

Today is the Feast of Corpus Christi, so I want to start by telling you a little about the origin of the feast. In 1263, a German priest was making a pilgrimage to Rome. He doubted the real presence in the Eucharist, or the bread and wine becoming the body and blood of Christ. On his travels, he stopped at a small church to celebrate Mass. At the end of the Eucharistic Prayer the host began to bleed and the blood dropped on the corporal, a cloth on the altar. The little church was just outside of Orvieto in Italy, and Pope Urban IV happened to be in residence there. The Pope recognized the miracle and instituted the feast of Corpus Christi. The Duomo di Orvieto was built after that time and it displays the relic. The feast of Corpus Christi is a big celebration to this day, and I happened to be there on Corpus Christi in 2000, when I was in seminary. Show pictures: Orvieto, Duomo di Orvieto, relic inside the Duomo, beginnings of the procession, flower and seed mosaics on the streets.

In 1263, I do not think that German priest was the first or the last to doubt the real presence in the Eucharist. We hear in the Gospel today “I am the living bread that came down from heaven, whoever eats this bread will live forever...Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.” The people at the time found this hard to believe. The Catholic Church teaches that Jesus meant what he said. Jesus said this is my body, this is my blood. He does not say this is symbolic of my body, this is symbolic of my blood. The Church teaches that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ during the celebration of the Mass. So, what do you believe? Do you believe things exist that you cannot see? Do you believe things

exist that cannot be proven? There are those who have a scientific mindset that everything that exists can be proven. If we do not have proof it is just because we have not done the right research yet. I believe that many things exist that we cannot see. Things happen in my life every day that I cannot explain, but I know they happen. I think there will always be things that are beyond our understanding but that does not mean that they do not exist. I think the real presence in the Eucharist is one of them. Millions and millions of people over the years have believed in the real presence. We have been celebrating Mass for 2,000 years with congregations of believers. We have had big celebrations all over the world for 700 years for the feast of Corpus Christi. When I walk into a Catholic Church it just feels different than when I walk into to a non-Catholic church, and I think this has something to do with the Blessed Sacrament being kept on reserve. I chose to believe.

I think the God who created us knows that we are physical and spiritual beings. I think he knows that we need to have his physical as well as spiritual presence with us. The God who is everywhere can just as well be the God who is nowhere. I know God is in church when I come here. I can feel his presence. We become what we receive. You are what you eat. Every time we come to Mass we form a big procession up to the front of the church to receive the Eucharist. It is a great act of unity with other believers. The Eucharist is not reserved for the perfect but helps all of us on our journey through life. The Mass as the greatest act of worship to a God that has given us everything we have and has given us life. We know what we are going to get when we come to Mass and that is comforting in times of trouble. Do you believe? If so, why would you not be here every week? What could be more important?