

If I placed before you today all the gold in Fort Knox,
every diamond in the Crown Jewels,
every masterpiece in the Louvre,
every palace,
every fortune,
every treasure humanity has ever accumulated,
and then beside them I placed a single consecrated Host,
which would be worth more?

The answer is not even close.

The Host would be worth infinitely more.

Because all the treasures of the world are created things.

The Eucharist is God.

That is why the Church gathers today for Corpus Christi.

Not to celebrate an idea.

Not to celebrate a symbol.

Not to celebrate a memory.

But to celebrate a Person.

Jesus Christ.

The Son of God.

Present among His people.

Listen to how the Church sings today in the Sequence:

"Praise, O Sion, praise your Saviour, praise your captain and your pastor."

And then St Thomas Aquinas immediately tells us something remarkable:

"His worth all praises far exceed, none can reach his dignity."

In other words:

However much we praise Him, it is not enough.

However beautiful our hymns, they are not enough.

However magnificent our churches, they are not enough.

Because the One present in the Eucharist is not merely holy.

He is God.

And that is what today's children receive for the first time.

Not something.

Someone.

Not blessed bread.

Jesus Christ.

The Lord whom angels adore.

The Creator of the stars.

The King of Heaven.

The Sequence calls the Eucharist:

"A living and life-giving bread."

Not dead bread.

Not ordinary bread.

Living bread.

Because Christ is alive.

The One we receive today is risen from the dead.

The One we receive today reigns at the right hand of the Father.

The One we receive today will come again in glory.

And then the Church takes us back to the Last Supper.

"Which in the supper of our Lord, to twelve disciples at his board, no doubt was delivered."

No doubt.

The Church has never doubted.

For two thousand years she has believed the words of Jesus.

"This is my body."

"This is my blood."

Not "This represents."

Not "This symbolises."

This is.

And because Christ speaks the truth, the Church believes Him.

Then comes one of the most beautiful lines:

"Old decrees be new annulled, shadows are in truths fulfilled, day finishes darkness."

All through the Old Testament, God was preparing His people.

The Passover lamb.

The manna in the desert.

The sacrifices in the Temple.

All were signs.

All were shadows.

All were pointing forward.

And now the reality has arrived.

The Lamb of God.

The Bread from Heaven.

The true sacrifice.

Jesus Christ.

Then St Thomas reaches the very heart of the mystery:

"Christians are by faith assured that to flesh the bread is changed, the wine to blood most precious."

That is what happens at every Mass.

Not a symbol becoming more meaningful.

Not bread becoming holy bread.

Bread becomes Christ.

Wine becomes Christ.

And then he admits something important.

"That no wit nor sense conceives, firm and grounded faith believes."

Our eyes cannot see it.

Our hands cannot feel it.

Science cannot measure it.

The senses stop.

Faith continues.

Because Christ has spoken.

And Christ cannot deceive.

The Sequence goes even further.

It says: **"Be there one or thousands hosted, one as much as all received."**

What does that mean?

It means that whether one person receives Holy Communion or a thousand people receive Holy Communion, each receives the whole Christ.

Not part of Him.

Not a fraction of Him.

The whole Christ.

Body.

Blood.

Soul.

And Divinity.

Children, today you will receive the same Jesus received by the saints.

The same Jesus received by St Francis.

The same Jesus received by St Thérèse.

The same Jesus received by St John Paul II.

The same Jesus received by countless martyrs and missionaries.

The same Jesus worshipped by the angels.

And today we also thank our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion as they renew their commitment before the parish.

Their ministry exists because of the greatness of the gift.

They are entrusted with the Church's greatest treasure.

Not something.

Someone.

The Eucharistic Lord Himself.

And we thank them for serving Christ and His people with reverence and devotion.

But now, dear parents and families, I want to speak to you very directly.

Today your children have learned that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist.

They have learned to bow before Him.

They have learned to receive Him reverently.

They have learned that Holy Communion is the greatest gift on earth.

The question is:

Will they see that truth lived after today?

Because children watch.

They notice.

They notice whether Mass matters.

They notice whether prayer matters.

They notice whether Jesus matters.

If they learn that Holy Communion is important enough for one special day but not important enough for next Sunday, they will remember that.

If they learn that Jesus is important enough for photographs but not important enough for ordinary life, they will remember that too.

The greatest gift you can give these children is not what is waiting for them at home.

Not the cards.

Not the money.

Not the meal.

Not the celebration.

Wonderful though those things are.

The greatest gift is to bring them back here.

Next Sunday.

And the Sunday after that.

And the Sunday after that.

To kneel beside them.

To receive Christ with them.

To teach them by your example that Jesus truly is the greatest treasure on earth.

The Sequence ends by calling the Eucharist:

"Angels' bread made pilgrims' feeding."

That is who we are.

Pilgrims.

Travelling towards Heaven.

And God has not left us hungry on the journey.

He feeds us with Himself.

In a few moments we shall approach this altar.

And when we do, remember:

If all the wealth of the world stood on one side,

and one Holy Communion stood on the other,

the Holy Communion would be worth infinitely more.

Because every treasure in the world was created by God.

But in the Eucharist we receive God Himself.

The Bread of Angels.

The Food of Pilgrims.

The Living Bread come down from Heaven.

The greatest treasure on earth.

And the only treasure we can take with us into eternity.