

If I placed before you today all the gold in the world,  
every diamond,  
every treasure,  
every palace,  
every fortune,  
everything people spend their lives trying to own,  
and then beside them I placed a single Holy Communion,  
which would be worth more?

The answer is simple.

The Holy Communion.

Every single time.

Because all the treasures of the world were made by God.

But in Holy Communion we receive God Himself.

That is what we celebrate today.

Corpus Christi.

The Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

And it is what our children receive for the first time.

Children, today is a very special day.

You have prepared carefully. You have learned your prayers.

You have learned about the Mass.

You have learned about Jesus in the Eucharist. You are excited.

Your families are excited. The whole parish is happy for you.

But I want you to remember one thing above everything else.

The greatest gift you receive today is not waiting for you at home.

Not the cards.

Not the presents.

Not the money.

Not the cake.

Not the party.

The greatest gift is here.

At this altar.

And His name is Jesus.

In the Gospel Jesus says:

**"I am the living bread which has come down from heaven."**

He does not say: "I will give you something."

He says: **"I am."**

The gift is Jesus Himself.

Imagine your best friend sending you a photograph.

That would be nice.

Imagine your best friend sending you a message.

That would be even nicer.

But it would be far better if your friend came in person.

Today Jesus does not send us a photograph.

He does not send us a message.

He comes Himself.

That is why the Church sings today: **"Praise, O Sion, praise your Saviour."**

We are praising Jesus because He has given us the greatest gift possible.

He has given us Himself.

The Sequence also calls Holy Communion:

**"The Bread of Angels."**

I love that phrase.

The Bread of Angels.

The food of Heaven.

And yet Jesus gives it to us.

Ordinary people.

Ordinary families.

Ordinary children.

Because He loves us.

Now children, I want to tell you something very important.

Today is not the end.

It is the beginning.

Sometimes people spend months preparing for First Holy Communion and then think it is all finished.

But imagine making a new friend and then never speaking to them again.

That would be strange.

Today Jesus comes to you.

And now He wants you to keep coming back to Him.

Every Sunday.

Again and again.

For the rest of your life.

And parents, grandparents, godparents, and families, I speak to you very honestly.

Today these children have learned something beautiful.

They have learned that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist.

They have learned that Holy Communion matters.

They have learned that Jesus loves them.

But after today they will learn most from you.

Children watch.

Children notice.

Children remember.

They notice whether Mum and Dad pray.

They notice whether Mass matters.

They notice whether Jesus matters.

They notice whether faith is something real or merely something we talk about.

If these children see you kneeling beside them next Sunday, they will remember.

If they see you bringing them faithfully to Mass, they will remember.

If they see you receiving Holy Communion with reverence, they will remember.

If they see you praying at home, they will remember.

And if they learn that today was important but next Sunday is not, they will remember that too.

The greatest gift you can give these children is not a celebration.

It is an example.

An example of faith.

An example of prayer.

An example of love for Jesus Christ.

Today we also thank our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion as they renew their commitment before us.

They remind us that the Eucharist is precious.

That what is distributed from this altar is not ordinary bread.

It is the Lord Himself.

And we thank them for helping God's people receive so great a gift.

In a few moments these children will come forward for the first time.

And perhaps all of us should ask ourselves a question.

Do I really believe what I am about to receive?

Do I realise who is here?

Do I recognise the greatness of this gift?

Because if all the treasures of the world were placed on one side,

and one Holy Communion on the other,

the Holy Communion would be worth infinitely more.

For every treasure in the world will one day pass away.

But Jesus Christ remains forever.

The Bread of Angels.

The Bread of Life.

The Food of Heaven.

The greatest gift God has ever given to His people.