

+ FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

June 11, 2020

+In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Ecce panis Angelorum...Lo, upon the altar lies, / Hidden deep from human eyes, / Bread of Angels from the skies, / Made the Bread of moral man.*¹

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
My very dear sons,

Throughout some two thousand years of history—much of it marked by major or even spectacular events—Our Holy Mother Church has seen and suffered much. Many a Caesar has tested Her holy resolve with outright or hidden persecution; not a few heretics have worked to pervert the true Faith in multiple manners, all to no avail (in the end), thanks to the grace of God. But never before our own time has there been, on such a large scale it seems, a general deprivation of the possibility for the faithful to attend the Holy Sacrifice of Mass and to receive Holy Communion, as was the case these past few months, due to fears concerning the spread of a new type of virus. It all gives us pause.

It is always easy to pose as the critic, when one holds no responsibility: voices, often legitimate in their concerns, have not been lacking to denounce this Eucharistic famine that has affected millions. Was it really necessary for our bishops to act in the way they did? The rest of us are not in a position to pronounce an absolute judgment.... In any case the events are what they are—past history (almost) now—and no doubt God, in any case, had His Divine reasons to allow the closing of our churches to the public celebration of the Most Holy and Blessed Sacrament. Perhaps we could try to understand somewhat this intention of Divine Wisdom on this feast of Corpus Christi of the year 2020.

While some Catholics seemed not really to mind having the obligation of attendance of Sunday Mass suspended, being fully content to watch Mass live-streamed over the internet or on television, or even simply not to assist in any way at Mass, others felt a hunger for this Bread of Angels, which no earthly food could ever replace. A total lack of appetite on the natural level is a sign of serious bad health. Having no appetite for God on the spiritual level is far worse. On the contrary, the thirst and hunger for God are at the heart of spiritual well-being and sanctity. “As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?”² Perhaps in a certain number of souls dear to God the Eucharistic fast and famine of these past days were a means to reviving that spiritual hunger and thirst. We also hear of faith-filled families, for whom the lock-down presented a teachable moment to impress upon the minds of children, and on those of their parents as well, the precious gift that the Holy Eucharist is for true Christians. There are no doubt stories of this sort that will leave their imprint on the lives of children who have lived through the corona virus crisis, impressions they will keep all their lives.

¹ Lauda Sion, Sequence of the Mass, composed by Saint Thomas Aquinas.

² Psalm 41: 1-3.

In any case, here at Our Lady of Clear Creek Abbey, we have the great privilege today of carrying the Most Blessed Sacrament on solemn procession and to adore the Sacred Host in this very special manner. With our Mother the Church and the Mother of Christ, Our Lady, let us pour forth our thanksgiving to God for this great gift that contains, not only the grace of God, but, astoundingly, astonishingly enough the very God of grace. All in all we must always remember, in a practical manner in our spiritual lives, to prefer nothing to the love of Christ and to express that love by loving one another as Our Lord so insistently commanded us. *O salutaris hostia...O saving Victim, opening wide, The gate of heaven to man below, Our foes press on from every side, Thine aid would supply, Thy strength bestow.*³ Amen. Alleluia.

³ Verbum Supernum, Hymn from Lauds.