

Homily Corpus Christi 2026

“The Eucharist is the ‘source and summit’ of our
Christian Faith”

We often tell our children or grandchildren, ‘mind your manners’ when they forget to say ‘please’ or ‘thank-you’. I once was at a wedding when the main celebrant Canon John focused his homily on these few words of St Paul, ‘Always be thankful.’ After the Nuptial Mass in the parish of Santa Maria in Panzano in Tuscany there was a wonderful wedding banquet, the bride and groom surrounded by family, relatives and friends. The groom stood up and opened his speech with those few words from St Paul, ‘Always be thankful!’ It’s not often 3 simple words make such an impact and at every anniversary of their wedding, ‘Always be thankful’ is emphasised by the family. That was 14 years ago and the couple now have 3 children and so much to ‘be thankful’ for.

Today’s First Reading from Exodus tells how The Chosen People are also reminded of their manners before God. Moses admonishes the people for grumbling and reminds them that Yahweh freed them from slavery in Egypt, led them through The Red Sea, gave them The Commandments of The Sinai Covenant and fed them with manna in the desert, providing them with water from the rock. They should therefore stop their moaning and Moses urged them, ‘Always be thankful.’

The manna in the desert was a foretaste and a sign of The True Bread from heaven, The Eucharist. Eucharistia, from Koine Greek, literally means ‘thanksgiving’. The Eucharist (Mass) is therefore, the praising and THANKING of God in time and space, by reliving the events of Christ’s Passion, Death and Resurrection through signs and symbols in the Sacred Liturgy. St Paul reminds us just this in today’s Second Reading from 1 Cor 10, ‘...the cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in The Body of Christ?’

In today’s Gospel, St John urges us to THANK God for the ‘living by bread come down from heaven, not the bread the Chosen People ate in the desert and died but the bread of eternal life’ in Christ’s blood. Jesus promises, ‘whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood (in The Eucharist) has eternal life and I will raise them up on the last day.’

Mass can become purely a routine or habit. Some might even simply go to Mass out of fear of mortal sin. Mass might be becoming for others an empty ritual as we go through the motions. Perhaps we need to be reminded to ‘Always be thankful’ as we gather round the table of The Last Supper and participate in The Wedding Feast of the Lamb. At Mass we are surrounded by the angels, saints and those who have gone before us in the sign of faith in one big hymn of THANKS and praise for our salvation in Christ’s precious blood. Maybe, we too need to be reminded to say, ‘thank you’, appreciating and focussing on the great price Jesus paid to free us from sin and death by his Passion, Death and Resurrection.

Please, ‘Always be thankful!’