

*O Salutaris Hostia* the opening line of a beautiful hymn composed by St. Thomas Aquinas in honor of the very feast we celebrate today. Are the same beautiful words that are sung world wide in the solemn rite of Eucharistic Exposition. Words of such great beauty which led St. Bonaventure to tear up his own composition so as not to degrade them with the ire of comparison. These words herald and present one of the most central mysteries of our Faith. That within the consecrated host the fullness of Christ's Body, Blood, Soul, & Divinity are present. *O Salutaris Hostia*, O Saving Victim, O Victim of Salvation. Ever mystical, *Corpus Christi*.

What a beautiful, powerful, and unfathomable mystery this is? All of our language and all of our understanding balks in the presence of Our Lord. For in order to understand the mystery of *Corpus Christi*, you must be capable of reconciling how the God of power and majesty who led the Israelites out of Egypt with a mighty arm has deigned to permit Himself to become present in these elements which we may hold in the palm of our hands. Realizing that Holy Communion is not a mere reduction in God's immensity, but that they are one and the same.

This is a truth that many look at us and say, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" And by many I mean the very crowds who first heard these words from the very mouth of Jesus Christ. Without doubt this is a tough saying. Thus in

varied and partial ways we may hope to understand this little by little. First and foremost we ought to realize what the crowds did not, Jesus does not ask for perfect understanding he asks that we believe in Him and that He has come from the Father. This act of Faith is the foundation of our Christian life. Next, that we do not have to limit our scope to the context of the Gospel but have all of Sacred Scripture present to us as the Word of God, to illuminate our understanding. Lastly, we make use of Tradition, especially the liturgy to unite us in worship of the True God, so that there may be unity within the body of Christ.

With regards to the first, the gift of Faith. The entirety of John Chapter 6 reveals how necessary this is and that it is truly a gift from God. Jesus does not muddle His words but is very explicit and clear about the importance of Holy Communion. Of course, His audience doesn't know about Holy Communion yet, but to some such as His Apostles they have received enough of this gift to remain. They may look at Him and all they can say is "You have the words of eternal life." We believe that you are from Heaven and thus we will remain with You. This does not mean that they understood the fullness of His words. Almost certainly there was great confusion amongst them.

A confusion wrought because their invitation is to journey with Jesus first. Later after the Resurrection, the Scriptures would become open to them and they would see how all of these events had been prefigured. The great power and

immensity of God in Exodus, while significant in showcasing God's true transcendence, has instead become the greatness of God choosing His people and caring for them. The Israelites were God's first chosen people. In a covenant that has never been revoked. However, now there is a new covenant that all, and truly every single person who receives Baptism has been made a member of. Yet the caring God who fed the Israelites with Manna in the desert is still the same caring God who feeds us with the Eucharist today. Those who were part of the Israelites ate of the Manna, and all of us free from Mortal Sin in the fullest expression of our Faith express our unity most perfectly in the reception of Holy Communion. For in Holy Communion we are united as the mystical Body of Christ, the mystical *Corpus Christi* which is the Church. The unity seen within the Eucharistic celebration is the unity that the Church is intended to be.

Thus our liturgical celebration that takes place here in its words and gestures informs our hearts and minds to offer true worship to God the Father. Wherein we enter the mystery of the Sacraments. These visible signs by which God's grace is made manifest in our lives. We existing within this physical and temporal world receive these elements not as they appear, but as they truly are. Every single one of our senses is fooled in this celebration, save one. The eyes, raised in adoration, see no more than the same host that was present beforehand. No odor of sanctity becomes manifest from the consecration, at solemn celebrations incense may

supplement but this is still from the thrice not consecration. The taste of eternal life is no different from our day-to-day expectations, and our hands which move God in His sacramental presence do so with ease and the standard expectation. Only our ears perceive true. For when you hear the words of consecration today, know that although the voice is Fr. Luke's, the speaker is Jesus Christ. At the moment of consecration Jesus is made Sacramentally present by virtue of Fr. Luke's priestly ordination. Thus the words we hear are truly spoken by Christ, and what Christ, the Word of God, speaks becomes reality. This is the prayerful Tradition of the Church, this is how we all remain united as One Body before Our Resurrected Lord, this is how we humble ourselves in awe at the humility of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus when we enter into the celebration of the most holy Eucharist we proclaim with absolute truth that it is "truly right and just our duty and our salvation always and everywhere to give you thanks." A Eucharistic action beyond all comprehension before which we fall down in adoration. Adoring Our Saving Victim made present now and for all eternity. *O Salutaris Hostia*