

CORPUS CHRISTI

Ave Verum Corpus, natum de Maria Virgine: hail, true body, born of the Virgin Mary. When we hear these words, we think automatically of the Blessed Sacrament - as their anonymous Medieval author intended that we should. But in earlier centuries, the phrase “true body” was a way of referring less to the Eucharist than to those who gathered together to celebrate the Eucharist. A much more common way of speaking of the Blessed Sacrament was as Christ’s “mystical body”: words that later came, of course, to be a synonym for the Church. And the way these two phrases came to swap places within the vocabulary of Catholic theology points to a profound, even a life-changing truth. It’s this. Our understanding of Christ present in the Eucharist, and our understanding of the Church are, or ought to be, inseparably bound up with each other.

When we call the Church the “body of Christ”, we are using language in a much more exciting way than when we speak of the “governing body” of a college or a sports federation. In those cases, we are simply using a metaphor, reminding ourselves (if we stop to think about it) that just as the different limbs and organs in a body cooperate together to ensure the smooth functioning of the organism, those who sit on committees do, or ought to do, the same. That’s true of the Church, too, of course. When St Paul writes to the Christians of Corinth he reminds them: the hands, feet, eyes and ears that make up this body need each other in order for the community to flourish. But St Paul doesn’t tell the Corinthian Christians, interestingly enough, that they are *like* a body: he tells them that they *are* a body, the body of a person with a name: you are the body of Christ, and members of it. And how does this come about? Through their reception of the Eucharist together: “you are one body because you all share in one bread.” Eating the flesh of Christ and drinking his blood builds us up into Christ. As the great 20th century Jesuit theologian Henri de Lubac puts it: the Church makes the Eucharist, and the Eucharist makes the Church.

And this has certain consequences. Thus, for instance, St Paul chastises the Christians of Corinth both for the laxity of their sexual ethics and their lack of charity towards the poorer brethren: if we are the body of Christ, as truly as is the consecrated altar bread, we should behave towards ourselves and each other with a similar kind of awe. This is why there should never be anything remotely prissy or puritanical about Christian chastity, which, rightly understood, is an acknowledgement of the beauty of Christ in ourselves and each other. It is also why the lives of the saints abound in stories of encounters with the hidden Christ who appears in the guise of the destitute beggar.

The feast of Corpus Christi, the feast of the true and mystical body of Christ, then, is an occasion of both celebration and challenge. In the first place, it is an opportunity to rejoice and give thanks for the great gift of God’s on-going presence with us in the Mass, unclouded by the thoughts of Christ’s impending suffering and death that are inevitable on Holy Thursday. It is right, on this day of all days, as St Thomas Aquinas reminds us, to sing with hymns of exaltation in praise of the Blessed Sacrament, to dare to give our all in worshipping Christ in the Eucharist. But it’s also a chance for a kind of examination of conscience. Do I treat myself, do we treat each other, with the loving reverence due to those in whom God himself has come to dwell? Do I do my part to make the Christian community to which I belong a worthy dwelling place for him? As Bishop Alan Hopes reminded us when he came to preach in Michaelmas Term, next to the Blessed Sacrament, the holiest thing in all of creation is our neighbour. And both are holy for the same reason: in both, we encounter none other than creation’s Lord. Happy feast!

Sr Ann



FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Sunday June 7th - Corpus Christi

CALENDAR

Sunday 7	CORPUS CHRISTI 9.00am Sung Latin Mass 11.00am Sung English Mass 2.00pm <i>Corpus Christi Procession at OLEM</i>
Monday 8	12.30pm Mass
Tuesday 9	12.00pm Mass
Wednesday 10	1.05pm Mass 12.30pm <i>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</i>
Thursday 11	1.05pm Mass St Barnabas
Friday 12	1.05pm Mass The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus 7.30pm Mass
Saturday 13	1.05pm Extraordinary Form Mass 4.30—5.30pm <i>Confessions</i> 6.00pm Vigil Mass
Sunday 14	11th SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME 9.00am Sung Latin Mass 11.00am Sung English Mass

REFRESH

On Sunday night, 8.15pm - 9.15pm, the SVP will host another hour of adoration, prayer and quiet in the chapel. Take a break from the hectic exam schedule, or the even more exhausting party schedule, and spend some time in adoration.

ENFIELD DEANERY

Priests and catechists from Enfield, in north London, will be visiting Fisher House on Tuesday 9 June. Accordingly, Mass will be at 12.00 noon, rather than 1.05.

VACATION MASS SCHEDULE

We commence the Vacation schedule on Sunday 21 June, when Mass will be at 10.30am. There will be no Saturday Vigil Mass on 20 June.

From Monday 22 June, weekday Masses will be at 1.05pm, and Sunday Mass at 10.30am.

CONSIDER YOUR CALL

On Tuesday 9 June, Deacon Philip Cunnah will speak about how to discern your Vocation. This talk is not just for those thinking of a religious or priestly vocation! 8pm: Adoration and Benediction 8.30pm Wine and talk in the Great Chamber.

CORPUS CHRISTI

On Sunday 7 June, there will be a Corpus Christi procession, beginning at Our Lady and the English Martyrs at 2.00pm and proceeding down Lensfield Road. Fr Mark will be preaching.

ANNUAL FISHER HOUSE GARDEN PARTY

The party will be held on Thursday 18 June at the Margaret Beaufort Institute, Grange Road, from 3.00 to 5.00. Dust off those boaters! Admission free!

LIBRARY RECALL

All books on loan from the library must be returned by 8 June for stocktaking to be begin.

COLLEGE REPS

Ryan will be on duty after Masses to see all College Reps, to check whether you are continuing for next academic year. If you are leaving Cambridge, please identify (and ask!) a successor for our records.

EXTRAORDINARY FORM MASS

Owing to an influx of visitors last Saturday, the EF Mass will now be celebrated next Saturday, 13 June, at 1.05pm. Apologies for the inconvenience.

LEAVERS' MASS AND BBQ

Next Sunday, 14 June, the 11.00 Mass will be specially celebrated for those leaving Cambridge. It will be followed by the annual BBQ on the terrace - £2 (leavers free).

OPEN OFFICE

Join Sr Ann 3pm - 5pm on Friday for tea, chat and some baked delicacies. Help with baking always appreciated!

FISHER DINNER

Drinks are served on the terrace at Fisher House from 6.00pm, and entertainment is available afterwards until the morning, when Morning Prayer will be followed by breakfast. Black Tie.

SPONSOR FR BRUNO

Fr Bruno will be running a 68-mile ultra-marathon on 26 June! He's hoping to raise £6,000 for training the new generation of Dominican Friars. Please sponsor him if you can via www.justgiving.com/BrunoCliftonOP/

ART EXHIBITS

If you have not yet collected your artwork, please come to Fisher House dining room during the week, where it is available. All uncollected art will be incinerated!

WEEKLY COLLECTION

Collection last week: £ 368

Thank you!