

Homily
June 19, 2022
Solemnity of the Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ
22:29-34:19

Have you all ever been to a Revival? If you have, raise your hand. All right. What's a "revival"? Have you ever wondered what that is? We know that very often there's a tent involved. And there's some really powerful preaching and altar calls. Those of us who are older remember very well, I'm sure, the revivals done by Billy Graham, which started out in California and spread throughout the world in his great missionary activity.

We don't seem to do revivals, do we? No. We do retreats. We do parish missions. But not a revival. Well beginning today, we're about to launch into the longest revival I've ever heard of: Three years. From today until July of 2025. The **Eucharistic Revival** in the United States. (We seem to have to do it bigger than everybody else, don't you think?)

But there's good reason that we're doing this. Eucharist is central to who we are as Catholic Christians. It's **central**. As Paul stated in the Second Reading so clearly in this first ever written-down description of what the Lord did at the Last Supper. He makes it very clear,

***Do this in remembrance of me.
And as often as you do it,
you proclaim the death of the Lord
until he comes.***

The death of Lord. Also, the Resurrection, obviously. And we await the coming of the Lord.

This Eucharist that we celebrate, my brothers and sisters, is absolutely an extension of the Last Supper, and Calvary, and the Resurrection. But especially that Supper. There is only one Sacrifice of the Lord. That took place on Calvary. But we participate in it - two thousand years later - every time we gather. And we remember. It's essential to who we are. And it was the command, other than, "Be One," in John's Gospel. The command he gave us, "Do this in remembrance of me." As well as, "Love one another as I have loved you."

I had the privilege these last couple of weeks to be in Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein (That's the smallest country in the EU. It's nine tenths the size of the District of Columbia. You go through it pretty quickly) And Switzerland.

Now this was a pilgrimage. It was a focus upon specific shrines throughout these four countries. And most of the shrines were somehow dedicated either to Mary or to one of the Saints of those areas.

And the shrines were always churches, large and small. They had sacristies. I got to see a lot of them. They had tabernacles: gold, silver, embedded in marble – *magnificent* pieces. They had pews and kneelers. Most of them had some padding on them. Some of them did not. (I felt badly for the people who were members of that church.) They had priests. And they had the altar of sacrifice – every one of them. Oh, different styles, obviously. You know – Romanesque architecture, Gothic architecture, Baroque architecture, and the madness of Rococo. (Do you know anything about Rococo? There's not an inch of the building left undecorated. It's enough to drive a sensate crazy.)

And there's the Word. The Word. Pulpits, ten to fifteen feet off the ground, attached to the wall in the middle of the room. So that without microphones they could be heard as they preached.

Every one of the pieces of those buildings that I have just described: - large and small, Romanesque through Rococo - every one of them is a reminder of God's presence in the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, yes reserved in those beautiful tabernacles, but the Eucharist that is enacted by the people of God and the priest, together. The Eucharist, which is a proclamation of the Good News. The Eucharist, which is there to feed, to enliven, to console, to bring us to hope, through the hard times –

All of these parts or ways that we "enact" and "live out" are essential to us.

As our coach drove through the four countries, it became very clear that Catholicism is very healthy in those four countries of Bavaria (that part of Germany), Austria, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. And as we drove along, whether we were on an interstate-style highway, or a very narrow back road, we passed village after village. And jutting up in the middle of the village was a very impressive roof and a steeple with a cross on it. And every time we passed, it reminded me how essential those buildings are for Eucharist. They "gather" the faithful, the body of Christ. The Word is heard. The Eucharist is celebrated. The Eucharist is received. Eucharist is then taken out within them, to live in the world.

So why are we having a revival? Look around. I know it's summer, but just look around. What do you notice? We're missing a whole lot of folks. Because my brothers and sisters, sad to say, we've lost that central sense of the Eucharist as God's Presence in our midst, as God's gift to us, as God's continual reminder of our salvation.

It's understandable. Our world is very distracting. We have many things. We have great health care. We live longer. We're very wealthy. But we've lost that sense of centrality.

So, we begin today. **Revival**. Which basically means *bringing to life again*. Bringing to life again. And so, let us begin well. How could we not? We're here. We're together as the body of Christ. We have heard God's Word, his presence in that Word. We see God's presence in each of us. And we know that we are about to witness that gift that Christ began so many years ago at the table with his disciples. And we will be fed. And we will be sent.

It's a good way to begin, don't you think - a three-year journey together to re-instill within us as Catholics throughout the United States - what a gift we have and what a gift we are called to be.