

Homily    Corpus Christi    18/6/17

( Homily preached at a First Holy Communion Mass)

These four young children are very privileged to be receiving their First Holy Communion on this very special day – a day dedicated to the Body and Blood of Christ. What a wonderful memory they will all have! In the First Reading today, we hear of the great miracle of the ‘manna from heaven.’ Moses prayed to God that food would be given to the Jewish people, who had been driven into the desert by their enemies – and in answer to his prayer God sent down manna, a form of bread, which appeared in the form of frost – but had the substance of bread. He then struck a rock with his staff, and from it flowed clear fresh water. The Jews still quite rightly remember and celebrate this miracle right up to the present day. For us Christians, this miracle is a foretaste of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ – because Jesus gives us Himself in Holy Communion, (manna from heaven) and life giving water (from the rock) in the sacrament of Baptism.

So to these four young people, what I would say is this, that when you receive Holy Communion, the life of God comes inside you every time – in the form of Jesus’s resurrected Body. Jesus’s resurrected Body is both transformed under the appearance of bread, and transforming for all those who receive Him. If you are faithful to Jesus, and pray, and get to know Him, then Jesus promises that you too will be transformed. If you are faithful to Him and follow Him all through your life, then Jesus promises that at the end of your life, He will bring you to live with Him, and God the Father in

heaven, to be happy, and have that peace which the world can never give.

But in the meantime, before we see God in heaven, your receiving of Jesus in Holy Communion will give you the strength to live as a faithful Catholic. Jesus will give you the strength to follow Him, even when people are critical of you or make fun of your beliefs. You will feel the power and Presence of God inside you, to help and guide you through this life, and to prepare you for your final journey to heaven.

And so we pray for these young children, and for all of us, that we will always cherish this gift of Jesus Himself in Holy Communion – a gift given to us, and the whole world by Jesus at His Last Supper, on the night before he died. And we remember very specially too that only three days later on the first Easter Sunday, He rose triumphantly from the grave. It's that resurrected life of Jesus, that we receive every time we come to Holy Communion.