

FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

*"My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink,
Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him." (John 6:55-56)*



The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, also known as the Feast of Corpus Christi, is a celebration of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. On this day, we recall the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper.

In the United States, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ is celebrated on the Sunday after Trinity Sunday, rather than on the Thursday. While the Last Supper is also commemorated on Holy Thursday, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ focuses solely on the gift of the Eucharist. The mood is also more joyous than that felt on Holy Thursday, the day before Christ's passion and death.

The origins of the Feast of Corpus Christi date back to the 13th century and to a nun from Belgium, Sister Juliana of Mont Cornillion. From an early age, she had a great love for the Blessed Sacrament and believed a special feast should be held in its honor. She is said to have had a vision of the Church as a full moon with a dark spot, symbolizing the absence of the feast. She took her cause to Church leaders including the Bishop of Liege and the Archdeacon of the Cathedral of Liege, both of whom became convinced. The bishop began celebrating the feast in his diocese. The archdeacon would go on to become Pope Urban IV, and in 1254, he issued a papal bull establishing the feast for the universal Church, placing it on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. Unfortunately, Pope Urban died just one month later, and the feast would not become more widely celebrated until the 14th Century.

The feast is often marked by Eucharistic processions, during which the Blessed Sacrament is carried in a monstrance through the church and into the streets. Many also spend time in Eucharistic Adoration on the solemnity.