Divine Participation
Corpus Christi 2017

Reflection By: Deacon Paul V. Hursh

"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him." (John 6:56) This is what is meant by the true presence of the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. The very presence of God dwells in us through the Eucharistic miracle. We literally consume Jesus' body and blood and by this action, we become the Body of Christ. We become what we eat. "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" (John 6:60b) Maybe you will react like many of Jesus disciples when he told them to eat his flesh and drink his blood. "Many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. (John 6:66)

Or perhaps you will believe on faith and accept Jesus' invitation to divine participation and welcome Jesus into your very being. Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." (Matthew 10:40; Mark 9:37; Luke 10:16; John 13:20) This underscores the desire of the creator to participate with his creation on a most personal and human level.

And why has Jesus come to be one of us? You may believe that Jesus assumes flesh to correct Adam and Eve's sin; perhaps Jesus would have
taken flesh whether we had sinned or not. Love by its very nature wants to be one with its beloved, so our salvation has been announced and realized by an Incarnate God. The suffering and death of Jesus confirms for us how deep and committed is God's love in the Incarnation. A love expressed in an embrace, not unlike the marriage embrace of the groom for the bride, so Jesus, the Groom, embraces the Bride, our Church. What is more intimate than entering into an embrace where the two become one flesh? By consuming the Body and Blood of Christ we become one flesh with Jesus and with one another. This is a great mystery.

And why did Jesus leave? Jesus' Pascal Mystery, his life, death, and resurrection, is the pattern of all things. We too are born, live, and die. Our children more fully take their place in the world when we die, so too do we become the body of Christ through the Pascal Mystery. Jesus' departure is not the end of Divine participation. Jesus does not leave us orphaned by his return to the Father, he sends the Holy Spirit to be with us forever. It is through the Spirit that we continue to be Christ in the world.

As you leave Mass today, remember to reverence the tabernacle as the place we reserve the Body and Blood of Christ. However, reverence also those with whom we share the Eucharist. They too are the Body and Blood of Christ.

Do you want to know what goes on in the core of the Trinity?
I will tell you.
In the core of the Trinity the Father laughs and gives birth to the Son.
The Son laughs back at the Father and gives birth to the Spirit.
The whole Trinity laughs and gives birth to us.

- Meister Eckhart, OP (c. 1260 – c. 1328)