

The Question of the Week

“And Jesus said: ‘I am the living bread come down from heaven.’”

John 6: 51

Today is the feast of Corpus Christi. The Body of Christ. The Eucharist. In the liturgical life of the Church I find it fascinating that there are three feast days in a row that separate the ending of the Easter Season and the resumption of what is called Ordinary Time. In the fifty-two weeks in each liturgical year there are three major seasons. There is the Christmas Season with the four weeks of Advent leading up to Christmas and then three weeks following Christmas. There is the Easter Season with the six weeks of Lent preceding and the seven weeks of Easter which follow. Then the remaining weeks of the year make up what is called Ordinary Time. Ordinary Time is by far the largest portion of the liturgical year. Ordinary time is characterized by green vestments. The reason being that green is the color of life and the ordinary life of nature reminds us of the usualness of this time. There are over thirty weeks in ordinary Time.

But in the transition between Easter Season and Ordinary Time there are three feasts. Pentecost. Trinity Sunday and Corpus Christi. The Holy Spirit. God, One and Three. The Incarnational and Eucharistic Lord. I have often wondered why those three feasts and why in a row? The best reason I have been able to come up with is that the Pentecost event is foundational. It is the birthday feast of the Church. Without the gifts of the Holy Spirit, without the fruits of the Holy Spirit, without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit we would all be lost, incapable and unable to follow Christ and live the Way of Christ in this world. But we are NOT without the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the animating feature in our lives even if we don't always realize it. There is an enlightenment that comes from the Holy Spirit (The Feast of Pentecost) who is to lead us to all truth.

The truth about God is that God is both One and Three, God is Love itself (The Feast of the Holy Trinity). The Truth about God is that the Father sent his Beloved Son into our world to take on our flesh and to become Divine Nourishment (The Feast of the Body of Christ). It is precisely because the Holy Spirit has been poured out and the Holy Spirit is to lead us to all truth that the Church then situates the two most profound Mysteries of our faith in succession. The Holy Spirit reveals the inner life of God and the outpouring of God's love in the incarnation of the Son. So there are the three feasts in quick succession which points to the intrinsic connection among the three.