



Newsletter of the
HOLY EUCHARIST APOSTOLATE

P.O. BOX 206, Lombard, IL 60148-0206 U.S.A.

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Could You Not Spend One Hour With Me? MT XXVI – 40

Seek His presence always.

Sirach 2:11

Characters of the Corpus Christi Feast



St. Juliana, 1193-1258



*Fr. Peter of Prague, 1263
(Miracle during Mass in Bolsena, Italy)*



Jacques Pantaléon (Pope Urban IV), 1195-1264



St. Thomas Aquinas, c. 1225 – 1274

The things we take for granted are easily lost. That is a saying quoted often by my father who died in 1957. He had been a minor movie actor in silent and later “talking” moving pictures, as they were known in his time, or simply “talkies.” The pictures were made on Long Island, NY prior to the move to Hollywood by the studios.

That quote could have come from one of his movies or from one of his many radio broadcasts again as a character actor in dramas. Wherever it came from it has stayed with me during my life and its truth has been made evident to me many times.

Practicing Catholics are used to celebrating the many feast days of the Church throughout the liturgical year and the years of their lives. So one could easily take one or more feasts for granted without thinking about how they came to be. One such feast is Corpus Christi.

Of course we think of the Last Supper and Holy Thursday when we come to Corpus Christi or as it is now called the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. We may even realize that St. Thomas Aquinas provided the hymns for the feast. But, there is so much more behind and about this most excellent solemnity that is intriguing and that should be known and, heaven forbid, not be taken “for granted.”

The story of the feast involves a mystery priest, a pope, two saints, miracles and the persistence of a young woman favored by our Lord.

Here is a brief history from the *Wikipedia* website, under *Corpus Christi Feast*, regarding St. Juliana’s efforts of over 40 years to have a feast outside of Lent honoring our Lord’s Body and Blood:

St. Juliana of Liège

“The institution of Corpus Christi as a feast in the Christian calendar resulted from approximately forty years of work on the part of Juliana of Liège, a 13th-century Norbertine canoness, also known as Juliana de Cornillon, born in 1191 or 1192 in Liège, Belgium, a city where there were groups of women dedicated to Eucharistic worship. Guided by exemplary priests, they lived together, devoted to prayer and to charitable works. Orphaned at the age of five, she and her sister Agnes were entrusted to the care of the Augustinian nuns at the convent and leprosarium of Mont-Cornillon, where Juliana developed a special veneration for the Blessed Sacrament.

“She always longed for a feast day outside of Lent in its honour. Her vita reports that this desire was enhanced by a vision of the Church under the appearance of the full moon having one dark spot, which signified the absence of such a solemnity. In 1208, she reported her first vision of Christ in which she was instructed to plead for the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi. The vision was repeated for the next 20 years but she kept it a secret. When she eventually relayed it to her confessor, he relayed it to the bishop.

“Juliana also petitioned the learned Dominican Hugh of St-Cher, and Robert de Thorete, Bishop of Liège. At that time bishops could order feasts in their dioceses, so Bishop Robert ordered in 1246 a celebration of Corpus Christi to be held in the diocese each year thereafter on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. The first such celebration occurred at St Martin’s Church in the city that same year.

“Hugh of St-Cher travelled to Liège as Cardinal-Legate in 1251 and, finding that the feast was not being observed, reinstated it. In the following year, he established the feast for his whole jurisdiction (Germany, Dacia, Bohemia, and Moravia), to be celebrated on the Thursday after the Octave of Trinity (one week later than had been indicated for Liège), but with a certain elasticity, for he granted an indulgence for all who confessed their sins and attended church “on a date and in a place where [the feast] was celebrated.

“Jacques Pantaléon of Troyes was also won over to the cause of the Feast of Corpus Christi during his ministry as Archdeacon in Liège. It was he who, having become Pope as Urban IV in 1264, instituted the Solemnity of Corpus Christi on the Thursday after Pentecost as a feast for the entire Latin Church, by the papal bull *Transiturus de hoc mundo*.

We are given what may be called a “thumbnail sketch” of Pope Urban IV by the website: <http://catholicsaints.info/pope-urban-iv>:

Pope Urban IV

“Son of a cobbler. Studied theology and civil law in Paris. Canon of Laon. Archdeacon of Liège, Belgium. Sent on several missions by Pope Innocent IV. Worked to restore clerical discipline, and bring peace between the Teutonic Knights and the commoners in Silesia in 1247. Archdeacon of Laon in 1249. Worked in 1251 for the choice of William of Holland as Holy Roman Emperor. Bishop of Verdun, France in 1253. Chosen Patriarch of Jerusalem by Pope Alexander IV in 1255. Pope in 1261.

“Fearing a popular uprising against a French pope, he never went to Rome. He preached Crusade, but without effect. He created fourteen new cardinals, including the future popes, Clement IV, Martin IV, and Honorius IV; these appointments insured that the Sacred College firmly supported him, but gave it a French influence that would last over a century. Instituted the feast of *Corpus Christi (the Body of Christ)*. While working to increase the civil power and authority of the Vatican, he became embroiled in the dispute over the rightful king of the Two Sicilies, but died before the matter was settled.”

During the pontificate of Urban IV an event occurred that made history and directly influenced the pope to institute the Feast of Corpus Christi: It was a miracle of the Eucharist. It is described in the excellent collection *The Eucharistic Miracles of the World* (1):

Peter of Prague

“In 1263, a priest from Prague who was traveling in Italy was celebrating Mass in the basilica in Bolsena. When the moment of consecration arrived, a miracle took place: the Host was transformed into Flesh. This miracle strengthened the wavering belief of the priest in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The Sacred Species were immediately inspected by Pope Urban IV and by St. Thomas Aquinas. This miracle helped convince the Pope to extend the feast of Corpus Christi to the universal Church ‘so that this excellent and venerable Sacrament might become for all a memorial of the extraordinary love God has for all.’

“The Eucharistic miracle of Bolsena, depicted by Raphael in a well fresco in the Vatican Palace, took place in 1263. A German priest, Peter of Prague, stopped at Bolsena while on a pilgrimage to Rome. He was pious, but he found it difficult to accept that Christ was actually present in the consecrated Host. While celebrating Holy Mass above the tomb of St. Christina (located in the church named for this martyr), he spoke the words of consecration, and immediately Blood started to seep from the consecrated Host and trickle over his hands and onto the altar. At first the priest tried to hide the Blood, but eventually he interrupted the Mass and asked to be taken to the neighboring city of Orvieto, where Pope Urban IV resided.

“The Pope sent emissaries to investigate. When the facts were ascertained, he ordered the bishop of the diocese to bring the Host and the linen cloth bearing the stains of Blood to him. He had the relics placed in the cathedral. The linen bearing the spots of Blood is still reverently enshrined and exhibited in the Cathedral of Orvieto.

“Pope Urban IV was prompted by this miracle to commission St. Thomas Aquinas to compose the Office for the Mass and Liturgy of the Hours to celebrate the Most Holy Body of the Lord (Corpus Christi). One year after the miracle, in August of 1264, Pope Urban IV introduced Aquinas’ composition, and by means of a papal bull, instituted the feast of Corpus Christi.”



The Eucharistic Miracle of Bolsena

St. Thomas Aquinas

G. K. Chesterton authored *St. Thomas Aquinas “The Dumb Ox”* and it was published by *Sheed and Ward* in 1933. In this popular volume on the saint whose *thought is one of the profoundest and most creative statements of Catholic doctrines ever written* (2) Chesterton describes the following regarding the miraculous side of St. Thomas’ spirituality:

“...probably the most representative revelation of this side of his life may be found in the celebrated story of the miracle of the crucifix; when in the stillness of the church of St. Dominic in Naples, a voice spoke from the craven Christ, and told the kneeling Friar that he had written rightly, and offered him the choice of a reward among all the things of this world.

“Not all, I think, have appreciated the point of this particular story as applied to this particular saint. It is an old story, in so far as it is simply the offer made to a devotee of solitude or simplicity, of the pick of all the prizes of life. The hermit, true or false, the fakir, the fanatic or the cynic, Stylites on his column or Diogenes in his tub, can all be pictured as tempted by the powers of the earth, of the air or of the heavens, with the offer of the best of everything; and replying that they want nothing. In the Greek cynic or stoic it really meant the mere negative; that he wanted nothing. In the Oriental mystic or fanatic, it sometimes meant a sort of positive negative; that he wanted Nothing; that Nothing was really what he wanted. Sometimes it expressed a noble independence, and the twin virtues of antiquity, the love of liberty and the hatred of luxury. Sometimes it only expressed a self-sufficiency that is the very opposite of sanctity. But even the stories of real saints, of this sort do no quite cover the case of St. Thomas. He was not a person who wanted nothing; and he was a person who was enormously interested in everything. His answer is not so inevitable or simple as some may suppose.....

“When he was stationed at Paris, the other Doctor of the Sorbonne put before him a problem about the nature of the mystical changes in the elements of the Blessed Sacrament, and he proceeded to write, in his customary manner, a very careful and elaborately lucid statement of his own solution. Needless to say, he felt with hearty simplicity the heavy responsibility and gravity of such a judicial decision; and not unnaturally seems to have worried about it more than he commonly did over his work. He sought for guidance in more than usually prolonged prayer and intercession; and finally with one of those few but striking bodily gestures that mark the turning points of his life, threw down his thesis at the foot of the crucifix on the altar, and left it lying there; as if awaiting judgment. Then he turned and came down the altar steps and buried himself once more in prayer; but the other Friars, it is said, were watching and well they might be. For they declared afterwards that the figure of Christ had come down from the cross before their mortal eyes; and stood upon the scroll, saying ‘Thomas, thou hast written well concerning the Sacrament of My Body.’ It was after this vision that the incident is said to have happened of his being borne up miraculously in mid-air.” (3)

Pope Urban IV commissioned St. Thomas Aquinas, to compose the Mass and Office for the feast of Corpus Christi. St. Thomas composed hymns in honor of the Holy Eucharist: *Pange Lingua*, *Tantum Ergo*, *Panis Angelicus*, and *O Salutaris Hostia*. These beautiful liturgical hymns the Church traditionally sings on the feast of Corpus Christi as well as throughout the year during Eucharistic devotions e.g. Exposition and Benediction.

Deacon Bill Crane



King Saints Stephen of Hungary and Louis of France: Letters to Their Sons

St. Stephen, 969-1038 (4)

My dearest son, if you desire to honor the royal crown, I advise I counsel, I urge you above all things to maintain the Catholic and apostolic faith, with such diligence and care that you may be an example for all those places under you by God and that all the clergy may rightly call you a man of true Christian profession. Failing to do this, you may be sure that you will not be called a Christian or a son of the Church. Indeed, in the royal palace after the faith itself, the Church holds second place, first propagated as she was by our head, Christ; then transplanted, firmly constituted and spread through the whole world by his members, the apostles and holy fathers. And though she always produced fresh offspring, nevertheless in certain places she is regarded as ancient.

However, dearest son, even now in our kingdom the Church is proclaimed as young and newly planted; and for that reason she needs more prudent and trustworthy guardians lest a benefit which the divine mercy bestowed on us undeservedly should be destroyed and annihilated through your idleness, indolence or neglect.

My beloved son, delight of my heart, hope of your posterity, I pray, I command, that at every time and in everything, strengthened by your devotion to me, you may show favor not only to relations and kin, or to the most eminent, be they leaders or rich men or neighbors or fellow-countrymen, but also to foreigners and to all who come to you. By fulfilling your duty in this way you will reach the highest state of happiness. Be merciful to all who are suffering violence, keeping always in your heart the example of the lord who said: *I desire mercy and not sacrifice*. Be patient with everyone, not only with the powerful, but also with the weak.

Finally be strong lest prosperity lift you up too much or adversity cast you down. Be humble in this life, that God may raise you up in the next. Be truly moderate and do not punish or condemn anyone immoderately. Be gentle so that you may never oppose justice. Be honorable so that you may never voluntarily bring disgrace upon anyone. Be chaste so that you may avoid all the foulness of lust like the pangs of death.

All these virtues I have noted above make up the royal crown and without them no one is fit to rule here on earth or attain to the heavenly kingdom.

St. Louis, 1214-1270 (5)

My dearest son, my first instruction is that you should love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your strength. Without this there is no salvation. Keep yourself, my son, from everything that you know displeases God, that is to say, from every mortal sin. You should permit yourself to be tormented by every kind of martyrdom before you would allow yourself to commit a mortal sin.

If the Lord has permitted you to have some trial, bear it willingly and with gratitude, considering that it has happened for your good and that perhaps you well deserved it. If the Lord bestows upon you any kind of property, thank him humbly, and see that you become no worse for it, either through vain pride or anything else, because you ought not to oppose God or offend him in the matter of his gifts.

Listen to the divine office with pleasure and devotion. As long as you are in church, be careful not to let your eyes wander and not to speak empty words, but pray to the Lord devoutly, either aloud or with the interior prayer of the heart.

Be kindhearted to the poor, the unfortunate and the afflicted. Give them as much help and consolation as you can. Thank God for all the benefits he has bestowed upon you, that you may be worthy to receive greater. Be just to your subjects, swaying neither to right nor left, but holding the line of justice. Always side with the poor rather than with the rich, until you are certain of the truth. See that all your subjects live in justice and peace, but especially those who have ecclesiastical rank and who belong to religious orders.

Be devout and obedient to our mother the Church of Rome and the Supreme Pontiff as your spiritual father. Work to remove all sin from your land, particularly blasphemies and heresies.

In conclusion, dearest son, I give you every blessing that a loving father can give a son. May the three Persons of the Holy Trinity and all the saints protect you from every evil. And may the Lord give you the grace to do his will so that he may be served and honored through you, that in the next life we may together come to him, love him and praise him unceasingly. Amen.

In all things look to thine end (Ecclus. 7:40), and how thou shall be able to stand before a severe Judge, from whom nothing is hidden, who takes no bribes, nor receives excuses, but will judge that which is true. (6)

Practical Reflections (7)

Bishop Richard Challoner

How are we to dispose ourselves to receive the grace of the Holy Communion that we may profit by it.

The end of the Holy Eucharist is to unite us intimately to Jesus Christ, and to form in our souls a moral incarnation of His spirit and His virtues; an extension of the Incarnation: it is to perpetuate the reign of His grace and love within us, and to enable us always to live a divine and supernatural life in and by Him. Thus the grace which the Holy Communion produces in us is conformable to the end for which it was instituted; and is agreeable to what Jesus Christ says of it in the Gospel: for, first, it causes us to remain in Him, forming and imprinting in our souls the character of His virtues, as a seal makes its impression upon the wax to which it is applied; secondly, it makes us live by Him and for Him, that is, act only to please Him and by the influence of His love; thirdly, it enables us to live always a life of grace. Thus the grace which Jesus Christ communicates to us in the Holy Communion is to establish Himself in us, to make us act in all things and live only in Him and for Him, and to give us eternal life. We should dispose ourselves to receive and profit by this grace and these three effects of a good communion: first, by separating ourselves from all willful sin, and the affection for it; secondly, by renouncing and dying incessantly to ourselves; thirdly, by being ever faithful to the grace of God, and in the exercise of His love.



'Eucharistic Adoration'

Susanne C. M. Cech

*In monstrance, Thy beautiful
body has a holy glow.
I gaze upon Thee silently
with thanks that overflow.*

*Your presence fills the chapel,
with ethereal peace.
In worship I kneel,
humble and still devoid of speech.*

*How noisy the outside world –
If only they could hear—
Your whispered, "I love you,"
every day in every ear!*

*When I receive Thee spiritually
or in wine and host,
I offer myself back to You
with those I love the most.*

*My heart is now on fire
for Thee, Jesus Christ Divine.
and I pray someday everyone
adores in every shrine! (8)*

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- 1) *Catalogue of the Vatican International Exhibition*, The Eucharistic Miracles of the World, pp. 104-105, Lombard, IL, 2009, Real Presence Eucharistic Education and Adoration Association: www.therealpresence.org
 - 2) G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Thomas Aquinas "The Dumb Ox"*, back cover, London, 1933, Sheed and Ward.
 - 3) G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Thomas Aquinas "The Dumb Ox"*, pp. 134, 136-137, London, 1933, Sheed and Ward.
 - 4) *The Liturgy of the Hours, IV*, Office of Readings, pp. 1328 – 1330, New York, 1975, Catholic Book Publishing Corp.
 - 5) *The Liturgy of the Hours, IV*, Office of Readings, pp. 1347 – 1348, New York, 1975, Catholic Book Publishing Corp.
 - 6) Thomas a Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, Book IV, Chapter 24, p. 68, Rockford, IL, 1989, TAN Books.
 - 7) Thomas a Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, Book IV, Chapter 15, page 401, Rockford, IL, 1989, TAN Books.
 - 8) Used with permission of the author. Originally appeared in *The Orland Park (IL) Prairie*, June 28, 2018.