

Thought for the week
19th Sunday of the Year (B)
12th August 2018

In our Gospel today, we hear the third of five readings taken from chapter six of John's gospel. John is teaching us that,

“Jesus is the Bread of Life, the living bread that has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die but will live forever.”

At the Last Supper and by his passion and death, Jesus transformed the ancient Passover Meal, where a lamb was sacrificed, into the ultimate sacrifice of himself, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. At every Mass, we participate in the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf so that we can share in his resurrection.

Through the action of the priest Jesus becomes present in the species that we see and taste as bread and wine, but are in reality his body and blood. Due to our human nature and familiarity with the Mass we can become somewhat complacent about the reality of what is before us.

I was reminded of the reverence the Blessed Sacrament arouses in people at the New Dawn Conference in Walsingham last week. This annual conference is praying for a “new dawn” in the relationship between England and Our Lady, because Pope Leo XIII said in 1893,

“When England returns to Walsingham, Our Lady will return to England.”

During the conference myself or another deacon was asked to transfer the Blessed Sacrament between the marquee in which Mass was celebrated and the Chapel of Reconciliation. We were accompanied by a sacristan who rang a bell to let people know that the Blessed Sacrament was among them. As we walked across the fields all conversations stopped, children stopped playing games, food was put aside and everyone turned towards us and fell to their knees as we passed. Likewise, during the mile-long procession from the shrine to Walsingham Abbey, people at the roadside fell to their knees as the Blessed Sacrament passed.

As Catholics we are extremely blessed to have the Blessed Sacrament as part of our tradition. Let us encourage one another to be more aware of this wonderful gift among us and take every opportunity to receive the blessings Jesus himself offers to us.

Deacon Brian