



THE EUCHARIST, GREATEST TREASURE BEQUEATHED TO THE CHURCH BY CHRIST

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ABUJA, NIGERIA -

The Eucharist has been described as the greatest treasure bequeathed by Christ to the Church and has made her to be One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic, for more than 2,000 years. This assertion was made by the Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Most Rev. Ignatius Kaigama, in his homily at the celebration of the Mass for the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ; at Our Lady Queen of Nigeria Pro-Cathedral, Garki, Abuja. Noting that the essence of the celebration of the feast of the Corpus Christi is to highlight the need for the continuous and faithful reception of the Body of Christ. The Archbishop reiterated: “In every Mass, celebrated by a validly ordained Catholic priest, we believe that through the Holy Spirit the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ during consecration (when the priest pronounces the words of the institution).”

He continued: “This brings about a change in the whole substance of the bread and the wine called transubstantiation. The change here is inward not outward change. Once this happens, Christ becomes truly and really present in the consecrated species. Apart from consuming the body of Christ, we preserve and adore it outside of Holy Mass.” Using the readings of the day to substantiate the biblical foundation of the Eucharist, Archbishop Kaigama exhorts: “The spiritual effects and fruits of the Holy Eucharist are manifold”. He then outlined the spiritual and social benefits of the Eucharist. The Eucharist unites those who receive it worthily more closely to Jesus. The Eucharist binds all the faithful more intimately into the one Body of Christ which is the Church. Because we partake of the one and same bread, “we, many, though we are, are one body” (1 Cor 10:17). Received unworthily, the Eucharist brings judgment and condemnation, not grace (cf. 1 Cor 11: 17-37).”

The Archbishop added: “The social implication of the Eucharist is that it energizes us to an active love for our neighbour, doing away with the barriers of social, political, economic and ethnic differences. When the priest says “go in peace the Mass is ended”, he means, go into the society and break down the

walls of division, hatred, prejudice and allow the fruits of the Mass to influence your family, social, political, business, professional and recreational groups.” The local ordinary of Abuja Archdiocese went on to speak on the etiquettes for receiving the Eucharist, stressing the need for reverence, spiritual preparations including the Sacrament of Reconciliation and prayers. He also admonished faithful to avoid noise/distractions, use of phones/social media, newspapers, indecent dressing, receive communion irreverently and not proper contrition (cf. Mt. 8:8). He also admonished the faithful to make regular visits to the Blessed Sacrament and pour out their hearts to Jesus as well as pray for our troubled world.