



Corpus Christi

25-26 June 2011

Cycle A

By: Rev. Mr. Steven Roth

Some years ago there was a very controversial painting that rocked the art world. The artist was Rene' Magritte from Belgium. His painting was simply an image of a pipe yet the words beneath the image was what got everyone's attention. He wrote "this is not a pipe." When people first saw this painting they were confused and some even insulted. What does he mean this is not a pipe? Yet Magritte's point was just what the caption said...this is not a pipe....instead it is an image of a pipe.

For us, brothers and sisters, what we will soon see Fr. John consecrate on our altar and then receive is indeed Jesus. It is not a symbol or an image or a depiction. It is Jesus Christ! It is the same Jesus who walked the streets of Jerusalem. It is the same Jesus who died and rose from the dead. The host and wine we receive is Jesus. But just like the Jews struggled in today's gospel to grasp this, so too do we. To look at the host or the wine in our logical minds...its hard to grasp on how this could be Jesus. But that's not how the Lord invites us to receive Him. Unlike the painting of a pipe where we admire it from a distance and solely appreciate it from what we can see, with the Eucharist, we are called to allow it to transform us....to penetrate our very being. In receiving the Eucharist, we are offered Jesus in such a profound way, an opportunity to grow closer to Him... to strengthen and to love us but even challenge and redirect those areas of our lives that we are not so proud of.

It is in allowing this we find our faith in the Eucharist. Allowing God to be present in our lives, being open to Him and letting Him touch our lives. There is never a question of whether God will touch and transform us...no question of whether He will always be present to us because our God is a God of promises, promises that He never breaks. We heard in Deuteronomy, the Israelites are being reminded that God promised to care for them and He did. He provided manna in the desert, protected them during struggles and led them out of slavery. Awesome examples of what God can do.

Imagine in our lives if we were more open to God through the gift of the Body and Blood of Jesus. How different our lives would be. How much more would we be able to love and let God feed us by these rich relationships with others. How much more could we forgive those people who hurt us and allow God to free us from the slavery to anger and hurt feelings. But it is up to us to let the Body and Blood of Christ do this. How amazing our lives could be!

Or how empty our lives could be. Time and again we could receive the Body and Blood of Jesus but simply say Amen out of obligation or even fear. We could receive the Eucharist hundreds of times, yet not realizing who it is we receive, we choose to face the world on our own because what other choice do we have. We are alone. We stay stuck in a false understanding of God, a God that condemns and watches

for us to fall or a God that delights in our suffering instead of a God that loves us so much that He gave us His only Son. What more can we ask of God? We are offered Jesus every time we gather for Liturgy, He is brought to us when we are sick and even at the moment of death, we will be offered the Eucharist...and as the Church refers to this last Eucharist before death...food for the journey.

We in fact are never alone...if we allow God to transform us. A wonderful reminder for us is a story of a priest who was setting up for mass one day and accidentally dropped an unconsecrated host on the floor. He picked up this unconsecrated host and said to the person in the sacristy, just think what this could have been as he threw this unconsecrated host in the garbage can. Being thrown away as a worthless wafer that could have been a priceless treasure.

Please let this story not reflect our lives but instead may we courageously receive the Eucharist, saying Amen that we believe this is Jesus and we want to receive Him to transform us...allowing our lives not to be worthless but transformed into a priceless treasure as God created us to be. For Jesus desires, He calls each of us today to receive Him. Not to look at Him from a distance or simply admire Him. But instead Jesus calls us to receive Him into our very selves. Indeed Magritte's painting is not a pipe but our Eucharist is the Lord.