

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The cycle of the liturgical year is so full of symbolism and multiple levels of meaning! After the climax of the Paschal mysteries, we move to the celebration of Our Lord's Ascension, then the coming of the Holy Spirit and the realization of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. This Sunday the continued, triumphant presence of the Lord in the world is celebrated with the Feast of Corpus Christi—the Body of Christ.

Obviously, we are celebrating and thanking God for the Real Presence of Christ's Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharistic host, but the Eucharistic presence of Christ is the focus of Christ's greater presence in the world through the Church. This is why the Church is also called The Body of Christ.

How is the Church—the Body of Christ present in the world? It is present in three ways. First is what we call "the invisible Church" this is the communion of all those who are baptized and have faith in Christ. The Catholic Church teaches that all who are baptized and have faith in Christ are in a real, although partial communion. This means non-Catholic Christians really are our brothers and sisters in the Lord even though at times (as in all families) we disagree or even become uncharitable towards one another. This communion—real although incomplete—is a truth we need to recognize and affirm—seeking always to be charitable to non-Catholic Christians while seeking to encourage them to come into full communion through our witness of words and works.

Secondly, the Body of Christ the Church is seen in the "Visible Church". If one wants to find the fullest, most historically, doctrinally, and spiritually complete expression of the Body of Christ it is found in the Catholic Church. The catechism says that the "invisible church" subsists in the Catholic Church. While the whole Body of Christ is larger than the Catholic Church it is not smaller than the Catholic Church.

It is this full communion of the Body of Christ that so many at Our Lady of the Rosary have been called to. Both Father Ballard and I and Deacons Bob and Jerry are converts. Likewise, many of our parish and school staff and faculty and so many of our parishioners. As we came into the fullness of the faith in the Catholic Church, we did not repudiate our former allegiances. Instead, we added that partial expression of the faith to become full members of Christ's One, Holy and Apostolic Church.

Thirdly the Body of Christ is present in each of us who are united in this fullness of the faith, and this unity is affirmed in the one communion of the Body of Christ that we consecrate, celebrate, and consume at each Holy Mass.

Your Pastor,  
Fr. Longenecker