

Corpus Christi, Xavier Church, Ex. 24:3-8; Ps. 116:12-13.15-18; Heb. 9:11-15; Mk. 14:12-16.22-26

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Brothers and sisters, in the first reading we heard that Moses communicated to the people all the provisions of the Lord that he had heard on the mountain. They are mentioned in chapters 20 to 23 of the book of Exodus; it is worthwhile to read them over. These chapters are about the Ten Commandments, the rules of worship and religious festivals, the rights of workers - in Moses' time they were talking about slaves – laws concerning the interaction within the family, rules of ownership, and social laws regarding interaction with people in one's own circle and with migrants.

As far as the latter is concerned, dealing with people from our own circle and with migrants remains a sensitive issue, even today. In politics, the application of rules is sometimes handled in a harsh manner, as recent events with regard to taxation have shown.

Pope Francis, in his latest encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, pays attention to brotherhood and sisterhood and social friendship. For us Christians, it is necessary that the music of the Gospel continues to resound in our deepest being. This means, for example, that we experience the joy born of compassion, from being genuinely interested in another person. Now that society is opening up more and more after the corona pandemic, new opportunities for this are arising.

Above that, the music of the Gospel means that we continue to trust in God who will lead everything to good and that from this trust we can show tender love to the people around us, regardless of their origin, age or religion.

The music of the Gospel also means that we remain aware that God is always ready to forgive us and send us, so that we in turn can be forgiving towards our neighbours.

Brothers and sisters, we are here together to celebrate Corpus Christi and we can celebrate it in freedom. We celebrate that Christ has come as the High Priest of our salvation in eternity. The author of the letter to the Hebrews writes: surely, there was a sanctifying effect from the blood of goats and bulls. But how much greater is the power of the sacrifice of Christ, who gave himself out of love for us all.

The priesthood of Christ is the link between the Old and New Covenants. In Christ, we are one body throughout the ages and in all places. When He celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples, He gave His own Body and the Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many. By the way, the Old Covenant, which God made with Israel, has not been broken. Jesus did not come to abolish, but to fulfil. Our Bible contains both the Old and New Testaments and both contain the word of God.

At the Last Supper, Jesus spoke the words that the priest repeats in every Eucharist, the words of consecration. With these words, the New Covenant took effect. What Jesus emphasises here is that it is an everlasting Covenant and that it is meant for many. Or, as Pope Francis puts it in *Fratelli Tutti*: the music of the Gospel may continue to sound everywhere: in our homes, our public squares, our workplaces, our political and financial life. This music continues to challenge us to defend the dignity of every man and woman. This is what we do in remembrance of Him and what we celebrate on Corpus Christi. This year it will be more modest than in other years, without a sacramental procession along the Amsterdam canals. What is important is that Jesus told us that after his death He will drink the blood of the New Covenant again in the Kingdom of God. That is what we too may look forward to, because love never perishes. Amen.