

Reflection

For Sunday, June 18, 2017

“You Feed Them!”

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
<http://uscceb.org/bible/readings/061817.cfm>

Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

John 6:51-58

Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me.

— John 6:57

In 1928, Myles Connolly published a small novel entitled *Mr. Blue*, which tells the story of a young man who decides to live out the Christian faith in a serious, transforming way. The book was intended to serve as a Christian response to F. Scott Fitzgerald’s classic work, *The Great Gatsby*. Blue lives a life of extremes, we might even say of excess, but it is a far cry from the extravagance of the Roaring Twenties.

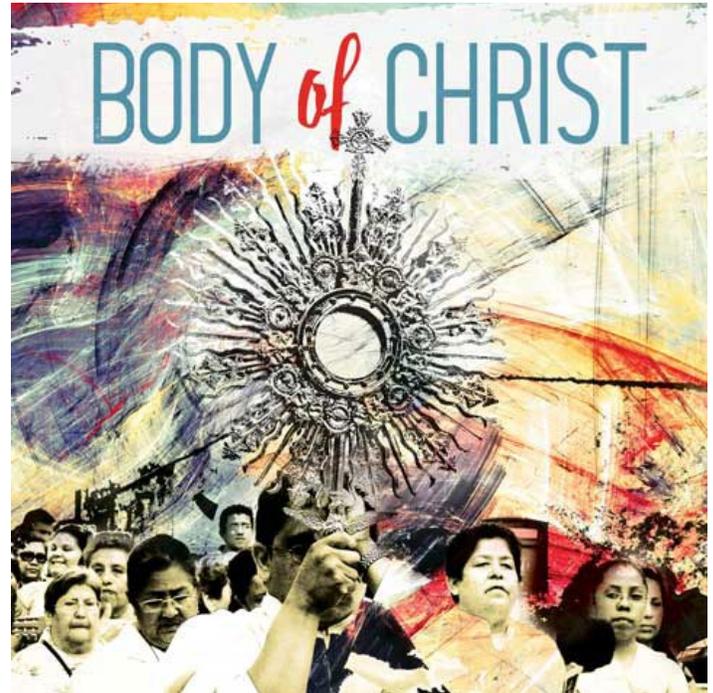
Mr. Blue has much to say to us about how faith in Christ can shape a life, transforming a person’s very existence into an act of *eucharistia*—an act of *thanksgiving*—that by its very nature draws others into communion.

In the novel, Blue tells the story about the kingdom of the Antichrist: the days of the “the ecstatic, passionate, beauty-loving, liberty-seeking people had, as was early predicted, come to a close. The sluggish frigid races had survived.” In the climax of Blue’s tale of a new world in which even laughter and curiosity had been forbidden by law, a priest, the last Christian, climbs the highest tower in a city of metal and, using hosts made from wheat he has grown himself, offers the last Mass, fulfilling his promise to “bring God back to the earth.” As the government’s forces prepare to destroy the priest high atop the tower using planes and bombs, the priest began to repeat the words of Christ at the Last Supper (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26):

One plane is now low over the roof of the tower, so low that the crew can make out the figure of the cross on the priest’s chasuble. A bomb is made ready...

And now the priest comes to the words that shall bring Christ to earth again. His head almost touches the altar. Hoc est enim corpus meum...

The bomb did not drop. No. No. There was a burst of light beside which day itself is dusk. Then a trumpet peal, a single trumpet peal that shook the universe. The sun blew up like a bubble. The stars and planets vanished like sparks. The earth burst asunder... And through this unspeakably luminous new day, through the vault of the sky ribbed with lightning came Christ as he had come after the Resurrection.



This image of a lone priest standing atop a tower in a burned-out world from which even the most basic expressions of joy, fraternity, and human freedom had been banned is a powerful one. But the power at work here isn't in the revolutionary act of the priest but in the way we are reminded of the expansive power of the Eucharist.

This understanding of the Eucharist inspired Saint John Paul II to write in words that seem to echo the vision of *Mr. Blue*: "Let us walk generously and courageously, seeking communion within our ecclesial community, and lovingly dedicated to humble and disinterested service to all, especially the neediest... On this journey Jesus goes before us, with the gift of himself to the point of sacrifice and offers himself to us as nourishment and support... break this bread of eternal life for everyone. A demanding and exalting task. A mission that lasts until the end of time" ([Homily, Corpus Christi, June 14, 2001](#)).

In the same way, our sharing in the Eucharist is an act of communion and we are brought into the life of Christ and the Church, as we are brought out of ourselves. We are raised up into the expansiveness of the Eucharist in a way that transcends any personal acts of devotion because we are given a share in the life of God that is itself expansive, always self-giving, and always oriented to others. We are reminded of this when, in the account of [Jesus feeding the multitude with only a few fish and loaves](#), he gives the command: "*You feed them!*"

This year, as the solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ coincides with the United States' observance of Father's Day, we are reminded of the many fathers, grandfathers, godfathers, and foster fathers, and those men with a father's heart, who give so much of themselves to provide for the need of others. And we know that this kind of fatherly care doesn't only mean providing food and shelter. Instead, to be a true "father" means nurturing the gift of life in one's child in all ways: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. This kind of fatherly love is all-encompassing and expansive. In its best moments, human fatherhood is ultimately a reflection of the divine Fatherhood of the God who loved us into being, desires all the best for us, and gives us all that we need.

And our response? We accept the gifts we have been given, the life we have been brought into by our act of communion, and we share that life with others.

Br. Silas Henderson, SDS

PRAYER

Sing, my tongue, the Savior's glory,
of His flesh the mystery sing;
of the Blood, all price exceeding,
shed by our immortal King,
destined, for the world's redemption,
from a noble womb to spring.

Of a pure and spotless Virgin
born for us on earth below,
He, as Man, with man conversing,
stayed, the seeds of truth to sow;
then He closed in solemn order
wondrously His life of woe.

On the night of that Last Supper,
seated with His chosen band,
He the Pascal victim eating,
first fulfills the Law's command;
then as Food to His Apostles
gives Himself with His own hand.

Word-made-Flesh, the bread of nature
by His word to Flesh He turns;
wine into His Blood He changes;
what though sense no change discerns?
Only be the heart in earnest,
faith her lesson quickly learns.

Down in adoration falling,
Lo! the sacred Host we hail;
Lo! o'er ancient forms departing,
newer rites of grace prevail;
faith for all defects supplying,
where the feeble sense fail.

To the everlasting Father,
and the Son who reigns on high,
with the Holy Ghost proceeding
forth from Each eternally,
be salvation, honor, blessing,
might and endless majesty.

Amen. Alleluia.

—"Pange Lingua" from *Liturgia Horarum*, trans. Fr. Edward Caswall (1814–1878).

NOTICES

2017 CHURCH NETWORK CONFERENCE, July 3-6

The Church Network's sixty-first annual conference in National Harbor, Maryland, is an engaging, thought-provoking three-day event offering you multiple ways to network with church leaders, find a mentor, get a sneak preview of emerging technology, and hone your skills. Whether you are new to church leadership or a veteran, it's an event you won't want to miss! To learn more and to register click [here](#).

FORTNIGHT FOR FREEDOM

The Fortnight for Freedom: Freedom for Mission will take place from June 21 to July 4, 2017. More information and resources for your parish from the USCCB are available [here](#).

PETER'S PENCE COLLECTION

Many dioceses will take up the annual Peter's Pence collection to support the charitable work of the Holy Father on the weekend of June 25. The USCCB offers parish resources on its website [here](#).

MIDWEEK REFLECTION EMAIL SIGN-UP

Know others who might be interested in receiving Connect! Midweek Reflection? Forward this email or send them an email to sign up [here](#).

To learn more about LPi's services and publications designed to help you build a vibrant parish please visit our website: www.4LPi.com

Liturgical Publications Inc
2875 S. James Drive • New Berlin, WI 53151
(800) 950-9952 ext. 2469

Send email address changes to: lpiconnections@4LPi.com

To opt out of receiving this midweek reflection, contact: lpiconnections@4LPi.com

Copyright ©2017, Liturgical Publications Inc. All rights reserved.