

**Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron**  
**Corpus Christi**  
**Blessed Sacrament Cathedral**  
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**(As transcribed from digital audio recording at liturgy)**

Page after page in the Gospels contain wonderful words of consolation that come from the very heart of Jesus, words that the church, our Mother, his spouse, this love to contemplate, like our Lady, hold these words in her heart. Today, perhaps, the word for us, for the Church, to hold in our hearts is what Jesus says just before his Ascension, “*Behold, I am with you always.*” It’s that simple, really, that our Lord Jesus has lived up to his name, to his reputation. In St. Matthew’s Gospel, the angel says to Joseph that Jesus’ other name will be Emmanuel, *God is with us*. And we know God is with us in many ways. He dwells in our hearts when two or three are gathered together – Jesus is in our midst. When we read the sacred Scripture, that’s Jesus speaking to us. In all the sacraments – Penance, Baptism, Marriage, Holy Orders – Jesus is present. But is there any more excellent, more wondrous way, than how Jesus is present in the Holy Eucharist? And that is really what we’re here for today, to simply enjoy his presence.

Benediction, Eucharistic devotion, began to evolve because the Church didn’t have enough quiet time in the midst of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The liturgy moves forward, and rightly, that’s its nature. And so we have Benediction; we have Eucharistic devotion – time simply to savor the presence of Jesus. The readings chosen for this feast day for the Mass, the readings we all heard earlier today when we fulfilled our Sunday obligation, talk about the presence of Jesus, his permanent presence in the Eucharist, as being with us until the end of the world, as a permanence of his Covenant. The Covenant is the bond of union between God and his people. In the Old Covenant between God and the children

of Abraham, in the New Covenant between those children of Abraham who believed in Jesus, Our Lady, Peter, Andrew, Philip, Mary Magdalen, and us gentiles, who are part of the new people by faith.

And so, day after day, week after week, Jesus is with us, because he is the Covenant, this very person is the union of heaven and earth, of God and mankind, humanity and divinity. He is the alliance; he is the marriage; he is the Covenant. We also should remember that the presence of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament is a Paschal presence. It is Jesus in his flesh that had been marked by the wounds of the scourging and the holes of the nails, and the side laid open by the spear – the same flesh, the wounded flesh, the offered flesh, the body broken as he said at the Last Supper for the salvation of the world. And it's the same blood that came out of the body at the scourging and the crowning and the crucifixion, until at last, there was just that bit of blood that came out of his open side. It's the same blood here in the Eucharist.

Third, I would ask us to remember in our prayer, in our meditation, that it is a liturgical presence – Jesus here under the appearances of bread and wine. Jesus is here certainly for our adoration, but he principally has given us this Most Blessed Sacrament to accomplish a task, a purpose. The Eucharist is for action. The Eucharist is as Jesus speaks about it in the Gospel, and as it was anticipated, prefigured, in the Old Covenant, as we heard in the first reading. He gives us the Eucharist, he is with us in the Blessed Sacrament, so that he can accompany us and be our strength on the way. He's here to be our manna. He's here so we can eat him and not grow weary, so that we can drink his blood and be a flame with his love.

That's why this procession today is so significant, so meaningful, because it is an act of faith for us, and we, on behalf of all the Church here in the Archdiocese, people who couldn't be with us today. Our procession is an act of

faith that God is not gone. Sometimes doesn't it seem, when people drive through or walk around the cities of Detroit, they might think God's not here anymore. And if that's been a question in people's minds, how more intensely it might be asked in these last 12 or 18 months, where we wonder where the jobs are going and where the next money will come from, and how can we pay the bills? Emmanuel, God is with us. Now of course, I'm not saying that because we have the Eucharist there will, tomorrow, be an economic upturn and a new blooming in all of our neighborhoods. But I do believe. I know that in the midst of whatever trials this year might bring for us, God is with us. That's what the Eucharist means. That's what Jesus says and he will never go away.

From the first day it was announced that the Holy Father was sending me back here to the Archdiocese of Detroit, people have asked, "*Archbishop, what can the Church do? How can the Church help? What will you offer?*" Well, I don't have any tips about the stock market, I promise you. And I have no great plan for economic or social recovery. I will give whatever word of encouragement I can and I urge everybody who has at least a little bit of wisdom about how to make our community better, to pitch in and do that. But what I most have, what the Church has, is the Eucharist. We have nothing better to give than Christ with us, God with us, dwelling here in his complete outpouring of love.

And so, he's here to comfort us and to give us power. Not the power of simply forcing everything to be right or better, but the power to love. To love in a way that the world never would have imagined is possible. So, when we take our stroll through the neighborhood with Jesus, that's the prayer – that his presence will bring new life wherever he goes. That he will be the sign of hope.

The meaning of the death and rising of Jesus is that there isn't anything so awful, so horrendous, so trying, that when God's love is in it, it will not bring life. Think of it. What could have been worse than trying to murder God – and they did

it – they killed God. And God used that most awful blasphemous act to bring the world into his arms. That’s what we tell the world by bringing the blessed Eucharist out into our neighborhood as we walk ahead and behind of Christ. This is a great act of faith and don’t anybody doubt how important, how powerful it is. We’re just a few people and there won’t be much media coverage, I’m sure. But this is the important thing and I am so happy that we are all here to love and worship Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Eucharistic heart of Jesus, Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.