

## **Feast of Corpus Christi – June 7, 2015**

A favorite family story: my cousin Barbara had to be taken out of Mass one Sunday when she was about three. As her dad carried her out, she screamed, “But I love God, too!” Everybody in church cracked up! You had to be there.

I tell this little story because I know, just as all of you know, that for parents, going to Mass with small children is always a great sacrifice. As much as parents try to make their small children behave, or at least not disturb others around them, someone is usually disturbed. An old wise priest friend of mine used to remind his parishioners that their commitment to being pro-life extends beyond the 9 months in the womb and includes the rambunctious phases of toddlerhood. As baptized Christians, children have the right to go to Mass, and it’s the parents’ responsibility to ensure they do, even when it’s inconvenient and difficult to suffer through.

There’s more to the Eucharist than we can see or feel. It has to soak in for a lifetime. And it starts with being little kids. The cadence and rhythm, the familiar ritual, gradually teach them and lead them to pay attention in new ways and find new sustenance.

We all know that there is more here at the Eucharist than we can see and feel. We come to the Lord’s Supper week after week for many reasons. Maybe we come to stay alive, to stay connected to the source and the summit of the Christian life. The Eucharist is meant to be God’s regular nourishment for us; it’s the gift of God’s physical embrace in real presence; it’s a regular communion with ordinary baptized followers of Jesus who look for union with each other and their God who cared enough to give us his body and blood, his life so that we might have life. We come here to be alive in Christ Jesus.

We all need some heart expansion to welcome Jesus. The Eucharist is an exercise in heart expansion. It works on us over a lifetime. And it begins when we are little shavers. Who knows? If we let it soak in over many decades, with all the peaks and valleys life presents, we may even be schooled for paradise. Won’t that be a hoot!