

Corpus Christi Parish

East Sandwich, MA



Corpus Christi, the name by which our parish community is identified, reflects the central mystery of our Catholic Faith, namely, the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ.

Among the recommendations made in his pastoral letter, *Porta Fidei*, announcing the Year of Faith, Pope Benedict XVI highlights the importance of the relationship between faith and art. Inspired by this recommendation, we have embellished our church with sacred art depicting Our Blessed Mother and St. John at the foot of the Cross (Jn. 19:25-27), and three saints, Tarcisius (3rd Century), Clare of Assisi, (13th Century), and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, (20th Century), each of whom was devoted to the Eucharist in a special way.

St. John comforts our Blessed Mother



The traditional image of the Crucifixion . . . portrays the Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross, according to the description of the Evangelist John, the only one of the Apostles who stayed by the dying Jesus. . . . The Evangelist recounts: Mary was standing by the Cross (cf. Jn 19:25-27). Her sorrow is united with that of her Son. It is a sorrow full of faith and love. The Virgin on Calvary participates in the saving power of the suffering of Christ, joining her “*fiat*,” her “yes,” to that of her Son.

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’ (Jn. 19:26-27). As Jesus finishes these words to His Mother and the Church, he takes His last breath and dies. The significance of these being Jesus’ last earthly words must be pondered. Christ hands His Mother to the Church so she can spiritually nurture and love them. The presence of Mary on Calvary, beside Christ crucified, manifests the will of the mother to unite herself to the intention of the Son and to share her suffering for the fulfillment of his work.



Saint Tarcisius (3rd Century)

Saint Tarcisius was a twelve-year-old acolyte during one of the fierce Roman persecutions of the third century, probably during that of Valerian. Each day, from a secret meeting place in the catacombs where Christians gathered for Mass, a deacon would be sent to the prisons to carry the Eucharist to those Christians condemned to die. At one point, there was no deacon to send and so St. Tarcisius, an acolyte, was sent carrying the "Holy Mysteries" to those in prison. On his way, a gang of boys, anxious to view the Christian "Mysteries," (Holy Eucharist) became a mob and turned upon Tarcisius with fury. Tarcisius later died from his injuries.

Saint Clare of Assisi (13th Century)

Saint Clare of Assisi lived during a tumultuous period in Italian history, and in 1234 San Damiano's walls were transgressed by soldiers in the army of the Holy Roman emperor, Frederick II. Clare was ill in bed but reportedly rose and went to the window with a ciborium, a chalice-like vessel that was used at the time to house the Eucharist. She was said to have raised the ciborium at the soldiers - some of them Saracen, or Muslim - who had mounted a ladder, and they fell over backwards and fled. Because of this story, Clare is sometimes depicted holding a Monstrance containing the Holy Eucharist in artistic representations.

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati (20th Century)

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, a saint for our times, was born in 1901 and died July 4, 1925. The Eucharist and the Virgin Mary were two pillars in his spiritual life. He mysteriously felt a great desire to be close to the Blessed Sacrament. He followed in processions and took part with great enthusiasm in the Eucharistic Congresses. But above all, he loved to spend long hours in night adoration. And his joy was so much greater when he was able to bring his friends with him, the young people that he knew and the poor who he took care of, to adore the Blessed Sacrament. During his Eucharistic vigils, the face of Pier Giorgio was transfigured by joy and consolation to see some of these young men and women go to Communion.

O Holy Saints of the Eucharist,
pray for us.



The Year of Faith began on October 11, 2012 and extends to November 24, 2013. This Year of Faith declared by Pope Benedict XVI is a “summons to an authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord, the One Savior of the world” (Porta fidei 6). In other words, the Year of Faith is an opportunity for Catholics to experience a conversion – to turn back to Jesus and enter into a deeper relationship with him. The pope has described this conversion as opening the “door of faith” (see Acts 14:27). The “door of faith” is opened at one’s baptism, but during this year Catholics are called to open it again, walk through it and rediscover and renew their relationship with Christ and his Church.

Importance of Sacred Art

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, ‘visible churches are not simply gathering places, but signify and make visible the church living in this place, the dwelling of God with men reconciled and united in Christ’ (CCC1180).

Theologian Max Thurian, in L’Osservatore Romano article (July 21, 1996) says, “The whole church should be arranged so as to invite adoration and contemplation. Every church must be “praying” even when no liturgical celebrations are taking place. It must be a place where in a restless world, one can meet the Lord in peace.”

Prayer for a Year of Faith

O Beloved God,
may this Year of Faith,
called by Pope Benedict XVI,
be a time of grace
and renewed commitment for us.
May it be a time to turn to You
with all our hearts
and embrace again the teachings
of Your holy Catholic Church.
May this year be a time to
strengthen our personal faith
and to proclaim the message
of the Scriptures with joy
and deep conviction.
May it also give new impetus
to the mission of the entire Church
which is to lead Your people
to a place of conversion
and especially to deeper
friendship with Christ.
Strengthen us, O God,
to accomplish all these things.
We ask this in Your Holy Name.

Amen.



YEAR OF FAITH²⁰¹²₂₀₁₃

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