

Occasion: St Joseph and the English Martyrs RCC, 18Jan09, 11.00am Sung Mass
Propers: [Second Sunday of Ordinary Time Year B](#)
Preacher: The Rev'd Fr Darryl M Jordan

+In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

On this first day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, I have just one question: What's the big idea? Well, that **is** the name of a Christian **company**. They produce Veggie Tales, the animated series starring Larry the Cucumber and Bob the Tomato. Sorry, tomahto. Children chuffed with veg? Well, alright, Veggie Tales is suitable for adults too; like all the best cartoons, they're safe and fun for the entire family. When I was a child – and thought as a child - it was Popeye the Sailor Man who said that spinach-k is not just wholesome but tasty as well. Yuk. He never convinced me. But cartoons about legumes, like Veggies Tales and Popeye, just aren't big enough to be the big idea I'm talking about, though it has to do with good food and strong bodies.

So is big idea to end global poverty? According to theology of St Paul the Apostle, and Pope John Paul II's [Theology of the Body](#), Christians have a responsibility to the whole person, not just souls but also bodies. Our Lady sang in her *Magnificat* 'he has filled the hungry with good things', and the Church's Social Teaching stresses a preferential option for the poor. Feeding the hungry is one of the Corporal Works of Mercy, body works as I call them, and you here at St Joseph's, and we over at St Michael's, certainly support ministries for the relief of poverty.

I recently borrowed from your parish library this video, *Viva Christo Rey*, or 'Long live Christ the King'. Produced in my native Dallas, it's about a ministry of total evangelisation, feeding body and soul, amongst the 'dump people' living off a landfill in Juarez, Mexico, just across the border from Texas. It was begun by a Jesuit priest named Rick Thomas, who died in 2006 (RIP). Fr Rick and Fr Dick, my rector, met in the charismatic renewal, and I met Fr Rick when he came to my charismatic Anglo-Catholic parish in Dallas. There he told us stunning stories of real miracles, like the multiplication, not of loaves and fishes, but of burritos; and also healing disease.

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So, are body works, backed modern-day feeding miracles, the big idea? Well, it's closer than food **cartoons**, and it does have everything in the world to do with the body. Today's reading from St Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth begins, 'Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food.' I think his point is that there's a design, a creative fit, between food and body, just as there is a creative fit between human persons, living and working together in unity and holiness.

Paul continues, 'God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?' He then teaches the virtue of chastity, saving our bodies for sacramental sanctity. In chapter seven, Paul says there are some things our bodies can do that are so holy they're meant for one man and one woman for life: married life. The Corinthians were a permissive society when it came to indulging in bodily pleasures. I'll leave it to your judgement whether ours is that way is well. But it's fitting that just as this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins today, the sanctity of families is being celebrated right through today in Mexico City, at the Sixth World Meeting of Families. *Viva Christo Rey* indeed!

Paul continues to teach **his** theology of the body, moving from the sacraments of marriage to mass. In 1 Cor 11, Paul condemns divisions. Those factions were most felt at the Lord's Supper, as **he** calls it, plus many of our separated brothers and sisters in Churches Together, Bishop's Stortford. But let's use a term we all can use - and now we come, at long last, to the big idea - Communion. Sorry it took so long. The big idea is why you're here: it's *communio*, since you like a bit of Latin. Cardinal Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, calls '*Communio* - the Guiding concept of Catholic Ecumenical theology' in this book, *That They All May Be One*. Sorry, this is my copy; it's not going back to the parish library. *Communio* is the basis for everything, because it begins with the Trinity.

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God **is** Love, *Deus Caritas Est*, as the Pope began his lovely first encyclical. And since God **is** Love, then God is Communion. And since God is Communion, then the **image** of God shines forth most fully as Christ's Body the Church receives his precious Body in Communion. Which brings us back to 1 Cor 11. 'All who eat and drink without discerning the Body eat and drink judgement against themselves.' And that's the reason we're divided. We can't be one Body in Communion until all **believe** Communion is Christ's Body - and Soul and Divinity. **I believe** in the Real Presence, but that's not enough. It's too big an idea to be a private **matter**; it's communal.

Catholic Communion also means **being** one body under one Bishop, who has Primacy in Love – at least. So even **Anglo**-Catholics like me aren't in full communion with **Roman** Catholics like you. The Successor of Peter, Pope Benedict XVI, is not in my College of Bishops. **I believe** in Papal succession, even **primacy**, but that just isn't enough. It's just too big an idea to be a private **matter**; it's communal. Some of us in the failing 150 year old **Anglican** Communion are finally getting the big idea: a global Communion cannot flourish without the Successor of Peter; nor is it meant to.

But at least we all begin as **one** in Christ. The Apostle Paul, still using his body language in 1 Cor 12, wrote, 'in the one spirit we were baptised into one body.' And that means all Christians, **everyone** who was baptised with water and the Spirit +In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.