

"The Body of Christ! "

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In the 4th Century, Saint Augustine Bishop of Hippo, in North Africa, addressing newly baptized converts instructed them to make a cross with their hands and to respond to the celebrant's injunction:

"Body of Christ!"

with the affirmation: "Yes, we are!"

Indeed.

Saint Paul reinforces this theology in today's 2nd Reading:

"Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."

One year while traveling through the Southwest, I attended mass at Pecos New Mexico.

On the Feast of Corpus Christi, the whole town processed through Pecos streets with the Blessed Sacrament. This custom seems to be gaining in frequency recently.

In today's liturgy, we pray the Eucharistic hymn of St. Thomas Aquinas.

□ It ends:

You who all things can and know,

Who on earth such food bestow,

Grant us with your saints, though lowly,

Where the heavenly feast you show,

Fellow heirs and guests to be.

Amen □ Alleluia!

And at every Catholic funeral, like the converts of Augustine's time, we are reminded of the white robe of baptism, and told to wear it now into the banquet hall of heaven.

And so with Thomas Aquinas, we pray:

O Holy Banquet

in which Christ is received,

the soul is filled with grace,

and there is given to us a pledge of

future glory!"

Amen.