



Vox Populi

30 May 2024

On Friday, we celebrate the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a feast which goes back to 1389 when Pope Urban VI instituted the feast as a way of asking the universal Church to pray to the Blessed Virgin Mary for unity and peace to heal internal conflict. The present date was only set in 1969. This was to follow the Annunciation of the Lord and precede the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist.

Like most feasts of Mary, it is closely connected with Jesus and His saving work. Its inspiration is the story St Luke recounts in the first chapter of his Gospel (Lk 1:39-45). When Mary was with child, she travelled to visit her elderly relative, Elizabeth, for a joyful reunion. As Elizabeth greeted Mary, Elizabeth felt her baby leap inside her. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth cried out, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” – acknowledging Mary’s role as the mother of the Messiah.

The Visitation also reveals much about Blessed Mary. Immediately after her exchange with Elizabeth, Mary sings her Magnificat, glorifying God for His greatness and perfect plan and revealing the beauty of her soul. She speaks of her “lowliness” (humility) and that “all ages” will call her blessed.

Mary and Elizabeth's joy reminds us of how the Church ought to respond to Christ's incarnation.

On Sunday, 2 June, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, also known as the Solemnity of Corpus Christi.

Originating in France in the mid-13th century and extended to the whole Church by Pope Urban IV, the feast calls us to focus on two manifestations of the Body of Christ, the Holy Eucharist, and the Church.

At every Mass, our attention is called to the Eucharist and the Real Presence of Christ in it. The Church is called the body of Christ because of the intimate communion which Jesus shares with His disciples.

The Feast of Corpus Christi is commonly used as an opportunity for public Eucharistic processions, which serve as a sign of common faith and adoration.

In Sydney, this will take place with The Walk with Christ annual Eucharistic Procession through the city streets on Sunday, 2 June starting at 2.30 pm from the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street to St Mary's Cathedral. All are welcome.