

There's a marriage taking place between heaven and earth; a sharing of blood both human and divine; an incarnation, bringing its task and its promise for us, to fulfilment. The Christ prepares his own end so that we might share in his anointing. We might recoil from the language of real flesh and real blood today reflecting our real distance from the natural world, the world of blood, sweat and tears that brings us our bread, and we might prefer to anaesthetise our vision of the world as one in which bread can be eaten and marriages made, without sacrifice. But the feast of Corpus Christi is a reminder that our faith in a benign God, in an eternal future, in the forgiveness of our sins, has been won for us through the passion and death of a human being: that the bread and wine we now share are a sign of suffering, just as any wedding feast is also a prelude to a life in which there will be pain as well as joy: the pain of childbirth; of caring consistently for others; of sharing in the pain, perhaps, of one's partner's decline:

*To have and to hold from this day forward,  
For better or for worse  
For richer or for poorer  
In sickness or in health  
To love and to cherish  
Till death do us part.*

Only, the faith that has been won for us, goes beyond even this otherwise final parting, taking us into a world where life never ends, fulfilling our own end too, one in which the gift to us of God- made- man becomes also the gift to us of man- made- God, or better, co-heirs and adopted children of God, to preserve the deep mystery of God and the deep mystery of what is going on here. For we no longer need to shed the blood of animals and sprinkle it on an altar and ourselves to secure this saving unity, we simply have to accept that this has, in Christ, been already done for us and to share in the marriage feast, even now, of heaven: to have and to hold the passion of Our Lord.

Br John Mayhead  
Monastery of Christ Our Saviour