

Corpus Christi Year A
4/6/2026

We ignore worms at our peril:

Without their help we would ourselves fall into a real abyss. Those simple beings play a role in both economics and history. They improve drainage and break organic matter into fine particles: in Darwin's words, "all the vegetable world over the whole country has passed many times through, and will again pass many times through, the intestinal canal of worms." That unromantic product determines the fertility of the soil, which in turn does a lot to dictate the nature of the society that lives upon it. (Steven Jones, p. 273, 'Darwin's Island').

Put simply, without worms there would be no bread on the table. Many of the farms around here have begun to realise this: years of deep ploughing and the intensive use of chemicals have destroyed the thin layer of soil, the bio-mantle on which all life depends. And so you see acres given over now to plants, which will hopefully replenish the nitrogen and worms upon which the future of farming and our own depend. It's a lesson that's taken a long time to learn or re-learn, captured as we are so readily by the idea that humanity can always engineer itself out of trouble by new technologies and new ways of re-using fossil fuel, not least in creating fertiliser. But, like the Chosen People in the desert, the game is up and we have to go back to our maker to recover our humus, our humility, our dependence not on our own creation but on the world as created by God. The real miracle is the world as it is.

If there's an analogy here with the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, it's that of dependence on the reality of Christ's flesh and blood, as re-rooting us in the reality of this world as our way to God, to salvation. There couldn't be a stronger reminder to us that the material world matters than the fact that God became flesh for us, or better with us, to lead us through the reality of the world as it is in all its materiality to a world in which matter still matters but in a resurrected form. It's one world at one with heaven. The bread on the table, broken and eaten together, both signifies and realises the oneness that we all have together in God. The worms will get us all in the end, but we can be matter of fact about this, knowing that it's all taking place in God who alone matters and in whom we have our being.

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