



**Pastoral Letter**  
**The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ 19 June**  
**2022**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today is Father's Day. One of my earliest memories is being lifted up on my Father's shoulders so that I could see the Corpus Christi Procession passing by. This was an annual event in our parish, full of pageantry and mystery. It truly was awesome. It was one of those moments when I felt the strength of my dad, holding me aloft for what seemed a very long time. I also felt the strength of my father's faith in Jesus, truly present in the Blessed Sacrament.

My own father went to God a decade ago now, but I often remember him. He was a quiet man who went about his daily work and looked after his family as best he could. Today, we celebrate the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. We might reflect on Jesus' patient and loving care of his people. In today's Gospel, we hear how he fed those who had been with him, listening to Jesus' teaching and receiving healing. Now they are hungry. The apostles want to help the people, but cannot imagine what will happen next. The Lord of the miraculous feeding is the Lord of the Eucharist, giving himself sacramentally to us today.

Next weekend, the Church celebrates the Tenth World Meeting of Families. Some will be gathering in Rome for this important moment for the Church to reflect upon marriage and family life. But this time, the emphasis is on celebrating family life within the local churches, the diocese. Our diocesan Marriage and Family Life Commission have

produced some ideas of what may take place in a family and parish setting. There could be a parish picnic or BBQ next weekend. This does not have to be an elaborate affair. Impromptu celebrations in my own family were always the best and most memorable! There can be special bidding prayers for various aspects of family life in the Sunday liturgy. Your parish community may have other ideas about how to celebrate with families. During the time of the pandemic, many of us have grown in our use of technology. Why not organise the possibility to join with Pope Francis as he celebrates the World Meeting of Families Mass in Rome? This takes place next Saturday at 4.30pm UK time. Your parish priest will have received information regarding the links for this and other possible ways to help individual families and parish communities celebrate this important moment for the Church throughout the world.

There will be a Thanksgiving Service for Families celebrated by myself, and taking place in our Cathedral next Sunday afternoon at 2pm. This will be followed with light refreshments in the Cathedral Centre. Schools have been invited to ask students to create artwork on "What is family?" and the artwork will be on display at the Cathedral Centre on the 26th June. I would love to meet you there!

But the dust will settle on these days and life will move on. The family is very important, in our society and in our Church. Please know that every family throughout the diocese is remembered in my daily rosary. One thing is for sure, we need to listen to our families as we also continue to reflect on what it means to be a synodal Church, to receive the wisdom and challenges of their experience, and to do what we are able to support those who are struggling and feeling overwhelmed by things.

Please do what you can within your parish communities next weekend to take hold of the graces and blessings which the World Meeting of Families offers to us.

Yours devotedly in Christ,

✠ David

Bishop of Northampton

Given at Northampton on the Feast of the The Most Holy Trinity and appointed to be read or distributed in all churches and chapels of the Diocese on the the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, 18th and 19th June 2022