



St Marylebone  
Parish Church

## Corpus Christi 2020

*1 Corinthians 11.23-26 (Sermon)*  
*John 6.51-58*

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

If humankind has understood anything about God in its long relationship with him, it is that God is a giving God.

God gives the chaotic elements of space - time and shape and births an ordered, purposeful universe.

To the planet we have called 'earth' God gives - a sun to rule the day and a moon to rule at night.

God gives vegetation and animal life, dry land and the oceans; gives it a custodian to whom God gives a covenant-promise of eternal companionship and love.

And God's giving goes on:

To his people, God gives the Patriarchs and the Prophets, the Judges and the Kings; the Law and the Promise of a Messiah.

Later in time, having witnessed the rejection of all his many precious gifts, God's generosity is so great towards what he has created and loves, he gives his own Son.

We worship a God who knows how to give and who goes on giving even when what he has created damages or destroys the many gifts of love he has showered upon it.

Our generous God is the God who gives, even when we will not receive what he gives, the God who goes on giving even when we throw his gifts back into his smiling face.

In Christ Jesus, God gives us himself, hands himself over to the world at Bethlehem but, at Calvary, this ultimate gift is, like all of God's other gifts, spurned, rejected, thrown aside.

But even this, does not make God withdraw to the side-lines of creation, God goes on giving and ushers in a new creation through the Resurrection of his Son on Easter Day, and, at Pentecost, God gives the Holy Spirit to be the companion and guide to all who choose to inhabit this new creation.

God's extraordinary generosity is incomprehensible and we can only begin to make any sense of it at all because we too give and receive gifts.

Young children will often come home from school with a stone, or a piece of paper with undecipherable writing on it, a picture roughly cut from a magazine article - and these things are, to them, truly wonderful and precious objects, and in return children will take tiny nothings, a shell, a sweet (often

half eaten), valueless but far from worthless tokens, gifts, to give to their friends.

Our giving, however insignificant is, in a very tiny way, a mirror, an echo, an imitation, of God's generous giving to us.

We delight in giving and we know how much it hurts to have a gift rejected or refused.

On this feast of Corpus Christi, we celebrate the fact that not only does God give us gifts, but that God gives us his very self.

In bread and wine, God reaches out to us and invites us to reach out our hands and accept the precious gifts he offers.

In these tokens of bread and wine, the whole of God's generous giving is encapsulated: from the primæval gift of order to chaos, through his gift of Prophets and Kings, on through the gifts of covenant promise and the Law.

In bread and wine, the Body and Blood of his Son, God offers us gifts which surpass all other gifts, and riskily leaves up to us the decision as to whether or not we will reach out our hands and accept - or reject, his gifts.

Corpus Christi, is the day on which we can return thanks to God for all that he has given us, including the gift of God's very self in Jesus.

Every time we do this in remembrance of him, here in person in our parish churches and cathedrals, or at home through making a Spiritual Communion, God the Father, through Jesus

his Son, at the hands of the priest offers us himself, offers us his Son, offers us his Covenant Promise of love and life.

God goes on giving. But it is up to us to reach out and accept these and discover all that comes with them.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.