Is this month of May crazy or what? For me this whole month of May has been filled with all kinds of activities. As many of you know there are five very important people retiring from our parish at the beginning of June. Because of my past experience in Human Resources I have been helping set up the process to interview prospective replacements and actually doing many of the interviews. It has been very challenging in terms of time and energy. And Father Charlie and I are not getting any younger. As a church we’ve had two very large funerals for police officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. We’ve also had First Communions, graduations from grade school, high school, college and all the associated parties and of course the end of another school year and the added challenge this year of getting our school ready to be renovated. What a great job Dana Forsythe, our Development Director, has done in coordinating all the activities associated with the renovations. All the staff and teachers in our school have done a marvelous job in filling up that dumpster we see parked in the lot and in taking stuff home that they will need when school starts again in the fall. Also the staff that works in the parish office are bearing up with all the painting and remodeling going on there. Tomorrow we close the month with a celebration of Memorial Day when our nation pauses to remember those who have given their lives to protect our Freedom. Please pause with me now in a moment of silence.

Pause for a moment of silence.
This month in our church here in the United States we have celebrated the feast of the Ascension of our Lord, Pentecost, the birth of our church, last week the feast of the Holy Trinity, and this week Corpus Christi, as the church used to call this day or what it is called today, the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

Just three short years ago on this very feast day I gave my first homily here in this beautiful worship space. Here I am again to share with you my thoughts about this feast day. I had actually gone back and looked at my homily from 2013 and wondered if I might use it again? As I read it I realized I’m in a different place today on my journey than I was three years ago. Hopefully the thoughts I share with you today will find you in a different place on your journey than you were then.

In our first reading from Genesis we heard about Abram being blessed by God Most High in his victory over four other kings. A meal is shared to build a bond between two people. These events foreshadow the person and work of Jesus.

In our second reading from our patron Saint Paul we heard the earliest account of the institution of the Eucharist in the words used by Jesus at the last supper. It is believed to have been written around 56AD. Paul tells us he is our link in the chain of teaching our tradition reaching back to Jesus. Here we are 2000 years later still connected to Jesus through those words. The death of Jesus, which is an act of love, is declared publicly by eating and drinking.
Looking at the gospel, what struck me this time was the idea of scarcity and abundance. This is an example of how Scripture can come alive even when we’ve heard it year after year. We as a community have not had a scarcity of things to do or think about. In fact there has been an abundance of activities to keep us busy and an abundance of mysteries to ponder and think about during this month. Let’s imagine for a moment being one of the twelve mentioned in today’s gospel as the day comes to a close. Jesus has shared his vision of the kingdom of God and healed those who needed to be cured. You and I are feeling pretty peaceful and joyful when the real world hits and we begin to think about the reality of what are we going to do with all of these people? How will we feed them? Food is scarce, five loaves and two fish are all we have. If only we had more! Then our teacher says, “Give them some food yourselves. I’ll show you how. Have them sit.” Then he takes the loaves and fish and looking up to heaven, blesses them, breaks them and gives them to us to feed the crowd. We do that and they all eat and are satisfied. When we go to pick up the leftovers we fill twelve wicker baskets. We are astonished and wonder where did this abundance of leftovers come from and what does it mean?

Coming back to today I think this mystery of abundance tells us several things. The most obvious is that all things are possible with God. Scarcity becomes abundance. The Eucharist is abundant mercy shown to people hungry for God. There is no scarcity of mercy with God.
There is always enough when we use the gifts God has given us. There is always an abundance of gifts and talents when we come together as the Body of Christ. There is an abundance of God’s presence in the mass. He is present in each person present here. He is present in the scriptures we read. He is present in the body and blood we share with each other. God’s presence is abundant. The food Jesus gives us is his abundant love and mercy that nourishes us, satisfies us, and transforms us. This love and mercy transforms us you and I into the abundant leftovers fragments – the Body of Christ – that continues Jesus’ ministry of giving self for others. The Eucharist is a perfect example of this self giving love. Here is a short passage from a story by Father Mark Link, SJ written in the year 2000:

St Augustine introduces a beautiful passage in his writings by asking, “What does love look like?” He doesn’t answer with metaphors that compare love to a child’s eyes or to daisies dancing in the sunlight. He answers in a more practical way: “Love has hands to help others, It has feet to hasten to the poor and needy, It has eyes to see misery and want, It has ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of others. That’s what love looks like.”