Pope Francis says the Eucharist is Jesus alive

On the feast of Corpus Christi, Pope Francis said that Jesus gave the Church the Eucharist for the salvation of the world.

“Every year the feast of Corpus Christi invites us to renew the wonder and joy for this wonderful gift of the Lord, which is the Eucharist,” Pope Francis said at the Angelus prayer June 23.

“The Eucharist is the synthesis of the entire existence of Jesus, which was a single act of love for the Father and his brothers,” he said. It is “the sacrament of His Body and His Blood given for the salvation of the world.”

The Solemnity of Corpus Christi, meaning the “Body of Christ” in Latin, is traditionally celebrated on the Thursday following Trinity Sunday or, in some countries including the United States and Italy, on the Sunday following that feast.

The feast provides an opportunity for the Church to focus on Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist, which Pope Francis stressed should be welcomed “with gratitude, not in a passive, habitual way.”

“Whenever we approach the altar to receive the Eucharist, we must truly renew our ‘amen’ to the Body of Christ,” the pope said, urging that this “amen” should come from the heart.

“It is Jesus, it is Jesus who saved me, it is Jesus who comes to give me the strength to live. It is Jesus, Jesus alive,” Francis said of the Eucharist in a departure from his prepared remarks.

Pope Francis said that the processions with the Blessed Sacrament that take place around the world in celebration of the Corpus Christi feast are an “expression of the Eucharistic faith of the holy people of God.”

“I too will celebrate Mass this evening in the Roman quarter of Casal Bertone, followed by a procession. I invite everyone to participate, even spiritually, through radio and television,” he said, according to a Catholic News Agency report.

“May Our Lady help us to follow Jesus with faith and love whom we adore in the Eucharist,” Pope Francis said.