

First Procession in 150 Years!

Corpus Christi Processions



June 6th this year was an immensely important day for the faithful of the Catholic Church. On this day, the Feast of Corpus Christi took place in churches. The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) is an obligatory, movable feast that falls 60 days after Easter.

At the Sanctuary in Unley...

The Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Unley was filled to the brim on that day. The solemn Mass was celebrated by Father Michał Skiba (Schr). Honor guards from the Polish School Association and the Polish Association took part in the celebration. A solemn atmosphere pervaded the ceremony. Last year, due to Covid-19, Corpus Christi celebrations were canceled, making this year's gathering all the more joyful. Words from the Gospel were proclaimed from the pulpit. After the faithful received Holy Communion from the main altar, the procession set off to four altars around the church.

These were deeply moving moments for us. We remembered the processions in Poland, which are unrivaled worldwide. But even in Adelaide, it was solemn and beautiful. Jan Kliś's orchestra played, children scattered flowers, and many people were dressed in traditional folk costumes (including the undersigned). At each altar, the priest offered words and blessings to the four corners of the world. We sang hymns and supplications. After the procession, we returned to the church, where Father Michał Skiba blessed us once again, and we sang the *Te Deum*.

... and in Polish Hill River

Time was pressing. It was the first Sunday of the month, which meant it was time for the holy mass in Polish Hill River at 3 PM. Such is the tradition.

After the service, we got into our cars and rushed to Polish Hill River to make it on time. There, another mass was celebrated by two priests—Father Michał Skiba and Father Wiesław Pawłowski. And... a great surprise! It turned out that after the service, we would participate in the Corpus Christi procession around the church, and this would be the first procession in this place in 150 years! Therefore, it held historical significance.

So after the holy mass, the procession began with the Blessed Sacrament, led by Fathers Michał and Wiesław, accompanied by altar boys with bells and lights—with all the splendor worthy of praising the Almighty God... All of us faithful followed (and the church in PHR was also full that day). We sensed that we were participating in something very important; we were somehow part of the history of this place and the Church. For me personally, it was an incredible experience that is difficult to describe now.

I observed the participants of the procession and the surrounding nature. The sun was about to set. The last rays illuminated the church courtyard. A gentle breeze stirred the

branches of the trees, and the setting sun filtered through the leaves. The little leaves seemed to cuddle up to those rays, longing for their warmth. In those moments, I thought of our compatriots from 150 years ago, who were surely also circling the church courtyard in the Corpus Christi procession. Now we walk in their footsteps! It is thanks to them, to their hard work—I thought—that we are in this place now. I felt a great gratitude for this small but incredibly important piece of "native land" on this continent. That is why I believe it is our sacred, unwritten duty to continue Their work.

After the Holy Mass on that day and the blessing to the four corners of the world, the Corpus Christi celebration in Polish Hill River, the first in 150 years, came to an end.

We satisfied the needs of the spirit; it was time to satisfy the needs of the body. A bonfire was lit where we roasted sausages. Our reliable volunteer coordinators prepared hot meals, drinks, salads, and other treats for adults and children. Father Michał, as always, played and sang beautifully for us. The faithful joined him, and beautiful Polish songs, not only religious ones, resounded in Polish Hill River.

This was an exceptionally important day for me, and it will remain in my memory for a long time.

Krystyna Kołodziej