I understand that it is a seller’s market in the home buying business.  Typical arrangements that benefit buyers offering them contingencies to back out are being waved.  Buyers are freely conceding these contingencies to win over sellers.  I suppose that a buyer who has been searching for weeks or months and lost out on his or her first choices becomes desperate.  One of these contingencies is to perform an inspection and negotiate with the seller on making necessary repairs; the other contingency has to do with the appraisal and the selling price.  It is considered almost reckless to accept the home as is; the mortgage underwriter will not offer a loan in excess of the appraised value, so if the purchase price exceeds the loan amount, of course the buyer is responsible for that difference.

This is the language of contracts.  I share this with us because this too is what happened in the bible when it came to God making covenants with God’s people.  A covenant was a contract between two parties setting out rights and responsibilities of both.  There was usually a ritual to bless the agreement like the offering of a sacrifice.  Blood which symbolizes life was sprinkled on both parties.  It establishes that the contract gives life to both parties.

The Bible offers us an account of God’s covenants with God’s people.  It started with Noah in which God promised to not destroy creation ever again.  The flood was punishment for the infidelity of the creatures God had made, so God started over with Noah and his descendants.  God then chose Abraham to make a covenant and promised him many descendants enough to become a nation and a place to live and blessings.  Then God renewed that covenant with Moses at Mt. Sinai pledging to free the slaves.  They would become God’s chosen people from now on and let them go from Egypt and enter the promised land.  In turn the people pledged to obey the 10 commandments.

It was to honor this agreement that blood was sprinkled around an altar fashioned by Moses; The altar represented God.  Then the remaining blood was sprinkled on the people.  Thus the two parties to the agreement were sprinkled.  The sprinkling celebrated the life that this covenant would bring to both parties.  Jesus formed a new covenant with God’s people at the last supper.  The supper table of fellowship becomes the altar of remembrance.  Jesus tells his apostles that he will be sacrificed on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.  Jesus tells them to remember him whenever they gathered in his name to bless the bread and wine.  The bread is my body; the wine is my blood.  Do this in memory of me, he said.

When you think about it, we celebrate the two parties to the new covenant each time we incense around the altar and then incense the people at the offertory.  It is a symbolic moment that indicates how two parties are present to the covenant.  The altar represents Jesus of course, who is God’s only Son, and we who gather for worship are the people of the covenant.  Then we remember the sacred meal Jesus had, and he becomes present again offering us his flesh and blood

This is an action of the Church inviting God’s people to be fed on the life-giving flesh and blood of the Lord’s sacrifice.  Like a mother inviting children to nurse, so too we are invited to feed and drink.  This is a grace-filled encounter with the Lord which brings us into communion with the Church, with the head of the Body and Jesus and with the members of the body, this community of faith.

On this Corpus Christi Sunday, we discover our roots from Sacred Scripture.  We are engaged in a covenant.  God’s part of the covenant is unbreakable; God’s fidelity is permanent and unyielding.  We are the weak partner subject to sin.  The Eucharist exists to pardon our everyday sins and to give us grace.  For more serious sin please come to confession.  Then freed from grave sin we can rightly enter communion with God who demands we fulfill his commandments and be his chosen people.