

Sunday Message

6 JUNE 2021

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 2

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

He fed them with the finest wheat
and satisfied them with honey from the rock.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament
have left us a memorial of your Passion,
grant us, we pray,
so to revere the sacred mysteries of your
Body and Blood
that we may always experience in ourselves
the fruits of your redemption.
Who live and reign with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Exodus 24:3-8

A reading from the book of Exodus.

Moses went and told the people all the
commands of the Lord and all the ordinances.
In answer, all the people said with one
voice, "We will observe all the commands
that the Lord has decreed." Moses put all
the commands of the Lord into writing, and
early next morning he built an altar at the
foot of the mountain, with twelve standing-
stones for the twelve tribes of Israel. Then
he directed certain young Israelites to offer
holocausts and to immolate bullocks to the
Lord as communion sacrifices. Half of the
blood Moses took up and put into basins,
the other half he cast on the altar. And taking
the Book of the Covenant he read it to the
listening people, and they said, "We will
observe all that the Lord has decreed; we will
obey." Then Moses took the blood and cast
it towards the people. "This" he said "is the
blood of the Covenant that the Lord has made
with you, containing all these rules."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 115

Response:

The cup of salvation I will raise;
I will call on the Lord's name.

or

Alleluia!

1. How can I repay the Lord
for his goodness to me?
The cup of salvation I will raise;
I will call on the Lord's name. (R.)

2. O precious in the eyes of the Lord
is the death of his faithful.
Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;
you have loosened my bonds. (R.)

3. A thanksgiving sacrifice I make:
I will call on the Lord's name.
My vows to the Lord I will fulfil
before all his people. (R.)

SECOND READING

Hebrews 9:11-15

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Now Christ has come, as the high priest of
all the blessings which were to come. He
has passed through the greater, the more
perfect tent, which is better than one made by
men's hands because it is not of this created
order; and he has entered the sanctuary once
and for all, taking with him not the blood of
goats and bull calves, but his own blood,
having won an eternal redemption for us.
The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes
of a heifer are sprinkled on those who have
incurred defilement and they restore the
holiness of their outward lives; how much
more effectively the blood of Christ, who
offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to
God through the eternal Spirit, can purify our
inner self from dead actions so that we do our
service to the living God.

He brings a new covenant, as the mediator,
only so that the people who were called to an
eternal inheritance may actually receive what
was promised: his death took place to cancel
the sins that infringed the earlier covenant.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the living bread which has come down
from heaven,
says the Lord.

Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 14:12-16. 22-26

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread,
when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, his
disciples said to Jesus, "Where do you want
us to go and make the preparations for you
to eat the passover?" So he sent two of his
disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city
and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher
of water. Follow him, and say to the owner
of the house which he enters, 'The Master
says: Where is my dining room in which I can
eat the passover with my disciples?' He will
show you a large upper room furnished with
couches, all prepared. Make the preparations
for us there." The disciples set out and went
to the city and found everything as he had
told them, and prepared the passover.

And as they were eating he took some
bread, and when he had said the blessing
he broke it and gave it to them. "Take it," he
said "this is my body." Then he took a cup,
and when he had returned thanks he gave
it to them, and all drank from it, and he said
to them, "This is my blood, the blood of the

covenant, which is to be poured out for many.
I tell you solemnly, I shall not drink any more
wine until the day I drink the new wine in the
kingdom of God."

After psalms had been sung they left for the
Mount of Olives.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant your Church, O Lord, we pray,
the gifts of unity and peace,
whose signs are to be seen in mystery
in the offerings we here present.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, O Lord, we pray,
that we may delight for all eternity
in that share in your divine life,
which is foreshadowed in the present age
by our reception of your precious Body and
Blood.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.



The Last Supper masterpiece by Leonardo da Vinci in Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan, Italy

At the Last Supper, Jesus spoke particular words. He declared bread to be his body, wine to be his blood.

The bread, he said, is his body "given up for you" and the cup of the new covenant is his blood "poured out for you". Jesus gave his life once and for all as a sacrifice for us. And he told us to gather "in memory of me". Which is what Christians have been doing ever since.

The feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ invites us to reflect on the wonderful gift of the Eucharist. It is first and foremost a celebration during which God nourishes us with God's own life. It is a memorial, not only of the redemptive suffering and death of Jesus, but of his entire life of self-emptying love. In sharing the one bread and drinking the one cup, we pledge to imitate him, who can never be repaid.

In the Eucharist, we gather in the shadow of the cross to give thanks for the death and resurrection of Jesus which has saved us from death. We gather in response to the command of Jesus to "Do this in memory of me". We gather knowing that the sacrifice required of us is no less than that of our very selves. ■

REFLECT

For Christians, one of the most painful consequences of the COVID-19 crisis was the closure of churches. People could not gather for public worship, except in tiny numbers for funerals and weddings. But, thanks to modern communications technology, people could still participate in online liturgies, and they did. Parishes were transformed into not just local but global virtual communities, with participants tuning in from far and near. By the end of the first period of lockdown, many parishes and local churches had built up substantial online congregations. New possibilities for evangelisation were opened up, priests and people saw the potential offered by communications technology in a way they never had before. It is good news for the Church going forward.

But while Catholics were delighted to be able to tune in online to a liturgy that suited them, there was one crucial element of the celebration in which they could not take part: they could not receive the body and blood of Christ; they could not be physically nourished by his body and blood. For online participants, it was a major sacrifice, a keen loss.

It was a painful reminder of how precious it is to be able to receive the Eucharist in person and to never take that privilege for granted. It has been an opportunity for us to think about the importance of the Eucharist in our lives. It was only when they couldn't physically come to Mass that many Catholics realised just how much it means to them. The first time they were able to receive Holy Communion again was an emotional experience, a moment of joy, something to treasure.

It's how we should always approach the Eucharist, which is the source and summit of the life of the Church, and our food for life. ■

SAY

"Lord, you nourish me with
the bread of life. Help me to
share that love with those
who need it most. Amen.

PRAY

The Act of Spiritual Communion, written by St Alphonsus de Liguori, is a beautiful prayer for when it's not possible to receive the Eucharist in person:

My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love you above all things,
and I desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace you as if you were already there
and unite myself wholly to you.
Never permit me to be separated from you.
Amen.

LEARN

Eucharist comes from the Greek word *Eucharistia*, which means "thanksgiving". Every time we celebrate the Eucharist we give thanks to God for all that God has done for us.

Vatican II teaches us that the Eucharist is the source and the summit of the life of the Church.

The Eucharist is a commemorative meal at which Jesus' death is remembered.

The body of Christ is our soul-nourishing food, the bread that gives us life.

DO

Make an effort to visit the Blessed Sacrament whenever you are passing a church.

