

Sunday Message

BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (CORPUS CHRISTI)

THE WORD

Year A • 11 June 2023 • Psalter Week 2

'I AM THE LIVING BREAD'

JOHN 6:51-58



Pope John Paul II in an encyclical called *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* asks the question, "Did the Apostles who took part in the Last Supper understand the meaning of the words spoken by Christ?"

Perhaps not. Those words would only be fully clear at the end of the Sacred Triduum, the time from Holy Thursday evening to Easter Sunday.

So it begs the question, did the Apostles fully appreciate the words of Jesus in today's gospel? 'Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.' This is new language for the apostles, language that will only really have meaning after the death of Jesus when new communities of believers gather to remember Jesus and to consume his body in the form of bread and wine. This moment in John's Gospel defines why these celebrations will take place.

The Eucharist is the celebration of the most intimate of moments between Jesus Christ and his followers. The Jews ask, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' And this is an excellent question. But think of going to Mass as a loving encounter between you and God. We will be fed 'by the bread that came down from heaven.' We will grow in love for Jesus Christ when we are greeted with the words, 'The Body of Christ.' We will leave this holy place feeling nourished and loved.

Like the apostles, we continually grow in our understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist. ■

DO

Make an attempt in the coming week to articulate what the Eucharist means to you. What happens during your short time at Mass that brings you back again?

SAY

Lord Jesus Christ, nourish me with your body and blood so that I may become what I receive in showing your loving presence to the world.

LEARN

'The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian Life.' (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* 11)

'The Church draws her life from Christ in the Eucharist.' (Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*)

The Mass is a memorial and the banquet of communion with the Lord's body and blood. (*The Catechism*, 1382)

REFLECT

Conversion and transformation are not easy. Ask anyone on the 12-step programme trying to stop drinking or taking drugs or gambling. There are always moments during the programme where the craving for a drink or a high pulls one away from the help that is needed. Ask someone who is trying to lose weight and has signed up for the WeightWatchers or Slimming World programmes. The chocolate éclair with double cream centre continually cries out to be held and consumed. It is not easy to change.

Bishop Robert Barron (www.wordonfire.org) states that sin is a lot like addiction. We find ourselves locked into a negative pattern of behaviour and we just can't get out. Most of us try so hard to move from hatred, anger or pride to something more whole and integral. Most of us are trying to move towards Christ. But it seems like a never-ending task for us.

And yet, isn't transformation at the heart of what happens at the Eucharist. The bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. This real presence of Christ enters our own bodies. And this presence of Christ within us has the power to heal us and change us. That's why we return to the Eucharist time and time again. To centre our lives in Christ.

This is the transformation that is at the heart of the Eucharist. It is a spiritual transformation that can lead us to living life in a new way. ■

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 Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14-16

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.
Moses said to the people: 'Remember how
the Lord your God led you for forty years in
the wilderness, to humble you, to test you
and to know your inmost heart - whether you
would keep his commandments or not.

He humbled you; he made you feel hunger,
he fed you with manna which neither you
nor your fathers had known, to make you
understand that man does not live on bread
alone but that man lives on everything that
comes from the mouth of the Lord. 'Do not
then forget the Lord your God who brought
you out of the land of Egypt, out of the
house of slavery: who guided you through
this vast and dreadful wilderness, a land of
fiery serpents, scorpions, thirst, who in this
waterless place brought you water from the
hardest rock, who in this wilderness fed you
with manna that your fathers had not known.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20

Response:

O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!
or Alleluia!

1. O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!
Zion, praise your God!
He has strengthened the bars of your
gates,
he has blessed the children within you. (R.)

2. He established peace on your borders,
he feeds you with finest wheat.
He sends out his word to the earth
and swiftly runs his command. (R.)
3. He makes his word known to Jacob,
to Israel his laws and decrees.
He has not dealt thus with other nations;
he has not taught them his decrees. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians.

The blessing-cup that we bless is a
communion with the blood of Christ, and the
bread that we break is a communion with the
body of Christ. The fact that there is only one
loaf means that, though there are many of us,
we form a single body because we all have a
share in this one loaf.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SEQUENCE

Behold the bread of angels, sent
For pilgrims in their banishment,
The bread for God's true children meant,
That may not unto dogs be given:

Of in the olden types foreshadowed;
In Isaac on the altar bowed,
And in the ancient paschal food,
And in the manna sent from heaven.

Come then, good shepherd, bread divine,
Still show to us thy mercy sign;
Oh, feed us still, still keep us thine
So may we see thy glories shine
In fields of immortality;

O thou, the wisest, mightiest, best,
Our present food, our future rest,
Come, make us each thy chosen guest,
Co-heirs of thine, and comrades blest
With saints whose dwelling is with thee.

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 John 6:51-58

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.

Jesus said to the crowd:

'I am the living bread which has come down
from heaven.
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.
and the bread that I shall give
is my flesh, for the life of the world.'

Then the Jews started arguing with one
another: 'How can this man give us
his flesh to eat?' they said. Jesus replied:

'I tell you most solemnly,
if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man
and drink his blood,
you will not have life in you.
Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink
my blood
has eternal life,
and I shall raise him up on the last day.
For my flesh is real food
and my blood is real drink.
He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood
lives in me
and I live in him.

As I, who am sent by the living Father,
myself draw life from the Father,
so, whoever eats me will draw life from me.
This is the bread come down from heaven.
not like the bread our ancestors ate:
they are dead,
but anyone who eats this bread will live
for ever.'

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.