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Body and Blood of Christ - 6 June 2024

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2 June 2024

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ Corpus Christi

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

Our readings today allow us to recognise the way our participation in the Body and Blood of Christ is a reengagement with the covenant of reconciliation, forgiveness and peace that Christ in the Spirit forged through his death.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the Bread from Heaven. Lord have mercy.

You are the cup of salvation. Christ have mercy.

You draw us around the table to be one with you. Lord have mercy.

Collect

The Oration

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.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Our collect has been in the manuscript tradition from the earliest times of the celebration of this feast and betrays some of its medieval predilections. The 'wonderful sacrament' which is also a 'memorial' of the passion is the celebration of the Eucharist itself. Piety somewhat confusedly, though customarily, also refers to the consecrated Bread and Wine as the Sacrament. The sacred mysteries here is the presence of Christ in the consecrated bread and cup. The question remains what it means to 'revere' this mystery. The Eucharistic liturgy would infer that the highest reverence to be made to the Body and Blood of the Lord is to eat and drink of it at the table of the Lord. The prayer is not so clear on this, and the thirteenth century context would dictate that it refers more to reverence by adoration and spiritual

communion. The petition links reference to an experience of the fruits of God's redeeming actions. There is in this not so much a dwelling on the passion of Christ, particularly the sense of blood, but a rejoicing that the power of the redemption is alive in us.

Acknowledgement

The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by Gerard Moore for the Canadian liturgical journal *Celebrate!* (Novalis Press). Our thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Exodus 24:3-8

While it is Moses and the people who prepare the offering, it is the Lord who makes the covenant.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 115(116):12-13, 15-18

I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord.

The psalmist opens their heart to give all to the Lord, even in death, because there is no way in which we can repay what has been given to us.

Second Reading

Hebrews 9:11-15

In Christ, God has renewed and re-imagined the covenant made with all creation.

Gospel Reading

Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

Our feast takes its cue from the last meal of Jesus with his followers.

Reflection

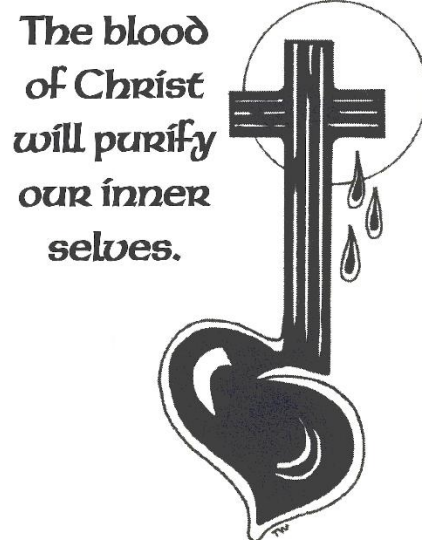
The readings for Corpus Christi, as the feast is popularly known, offer a view of our celebration that moves beyond the history and piety of its origins. Our Exodus and Hebrews texts bring to the fore the centrality of the covenant. There is a point in this that is not always clear to us. In Jewish theology, and in the understanding of Jesus and the early Church, a covenant is not made between equals, but made by a much greater power with a lesser power. God freely chooses to covenant with the chosen people, and in Hebrews with all people. While Moses is seen to prepare the ritual, all depends on the mercy and magnitude of God, who establishes the covenant in divine free choice, and welcomes the lowly into it. There is nothing equal in a covenant: God has all the power. Yet the covenantal relationship is awash with grace

and mercy, beneficence and respect. Our first two readings teach that at the heart of this solemnity is the immeasurable graciousness of God.

The Gospel is a reminder of the origins of our feast in the most considered commandment of Jesus himself. The bread of heaven is to be eaten. The cup of salvation is to be drunk, if not drained. This is specifically the action through which Jesus has commanded he be remembered, made present in our midst and for our ongoing conversion. In our communing we are in Communion with Christ and one another.

The medieval origins of the feast speak more to the presence of Christ in the blessed Bread and Cup, and of our response in adoration. The feast emerged when the faithful had been held back and held themselves back from receiving Communion. The concentration of Christian piety on the presence of Christ in the blessed Bread has a number of consequences which we still work with today. It meant that the presence of Christ could be brought to all parts of the city and town in procession, a re-making in a way of the journey of Communion to the sick after Mass. It also allowed for a strong devotionality to the transformed Food, providing an opportunity for the faithful to at least 'see' Christ and be nourished through sight. The practices of the feast in a way cemented the removal of the Cup from the grasp of those participating in Holy Communion: we still are stifled by the effects of this today.

In light of this potted history, our readings today seek to bring some balance to our understanding. Within this piety we are reminded by the Last Supper reading of the centrality of participating in Holy Communion within the Eucharist as the key to remembering Christ. This is set within a covenant framework, which reminds again that our Eucharist is the great gift of the graciousness and mercy of God. Our response is to be transformed through eating and drinking into a gracious and merciful community formed in the overwhelming love of God.



Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

People of God, as we gather around the table to share the Body and Blood of Christ, we bring our needs to the Father.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church that as they lead celebrations of the Eucharist they may always be open to the needs and cares of their communities.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the Church in Australia. Through sharing in the Eucharist may we be strengthened as we work towards a synodal Church.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of the world. May the Spirit bring them to understand that every human person has a right to sit peacefully around the table of life and share sufficient food. May they work hard to ease the burdens caused by war and conflicts to ensure equitable distribution of food.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the community gathered around this sacred table. May we always appreciate the love that God has shown through the eucharistic food that is the body and blood of Christ.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are suffering illness of mind and body and particularly those who suffer eating disorders. May the food of life bring them to peace and health.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for families who do not sit and eat together. May they find the determination to share love and food in a way that brings their family together in peace.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

God of hospitality, as we share this Eucharist, we know that your love is beyond our understanding and that you will provide for us our daily bread and all that we need to live the life of the Gospel. We make our prayer through the power of the Spirit, in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

The Body and Blood of Christ, Year B (2 June 2024)

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
Adoro te, devote				617		388
Alleluia! Sing to Jesus	191			619	449	371
An upper room did our Lord prepare				620	309	187
Bread of life, hope of the world					459	
Bread of the world in mercy broken				631	460	
By your priestly power, O risen Lord				634	462	386
Christians, let us love one another				648	469	206
Come, behold, the bread of angels					396a	
Draw near and take the Body of the Lord				668	482	
Eat this bread, drink this cup					484	205
For the journey			128			
Gift of finest wheat				685	651	191
Godhead here in hiding				696	162	
God with hidden majesty						388
How blest are we who share this bread				716		
Humbly we adore thee				709	507	
I am the bread of life (Toolan)	49			718	509	204
In the breaking of the bread	58					
In remembrance of you					359	355
Let all mortal flesh keep silence					533	190
Now let us from this table rise				753	560	
O God, we hear your story			118		571	
O Lord, at your first Eucharist you prayed				773	578	
One bread, one body	129				579	193
Praise, O Zion, Christ our glory					396b	
Seed, scattered and sown					592	
Song of the Lord's Supper					311	322
Soul of my Saviour				811	164	
Take and eat (Joncas)					608	198
Take and eat (Russell)			114		117	
Taste and see					609	34
Taste and see the goodness of the Lord (Herry)					610	
Taste and see the goodness of the Lord (Willcock)				595	611	33
The table of God			8			
This body will be given for you				839		387
We gather here, O God		99				
We remember	81					446

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
Alleluia! Sing to Jesus		97	
Bread for the world		157	
Come to the table (Angotti)	32		
Come to the table (Burland)	33		
I am the bread of life (Kaczmarek)	72		
I am the bread of life (Talbot)		153	
Jesus, bread of life	80		
There will be bread			373

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 115: *I will take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord./Alleluia!*

	CWB	JOBB	LPB	PM
Psalm 115	322	pg. 49	pg. 86	pg. 91 or 95 new ed.

Music selections by Michael Mangan

In the Body of Christ (LCC) [Esp V4, Communion]

One body in Christ (TWB) [Communion]

In memory of me (LCC) [CHILDREN: Communion]

The bread of life (SHOF) [Communion]

Given for you (SHOF, CWBII) [CHILDREN: Communion]



*I am the living bread
from heaven.*