

6 JUNE 2021

# Sunday Message

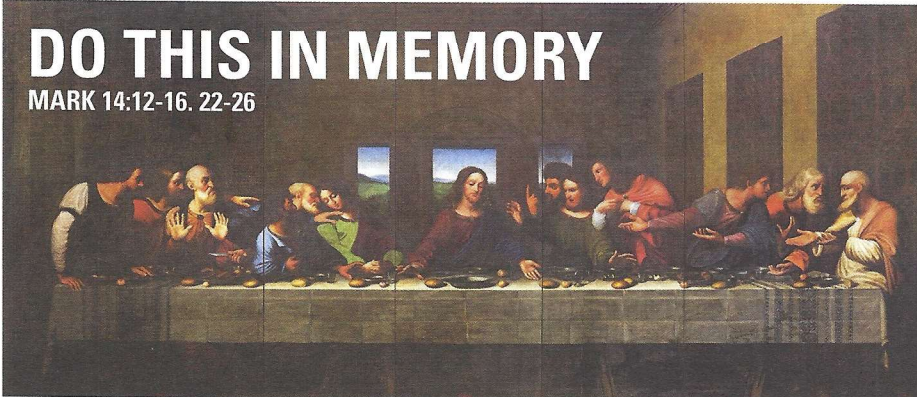
The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 2

## DO THIS IN MEMORY

MARK 14:12-16, 22-26



*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.



**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.

