

# 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. ■

### 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](http://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. ■

### 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)



**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**

Psalms 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:

Oft 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.