



# LIVING THE GOSPEL



## The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) June 2, 2024

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**Theme: "The Body and Blood of Christ."**

### **Gathering Prayer**

**All:** 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, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Exploring the Word**

#### **Gospel Reading: Mark 14:12-16, 22-26**

<sup>12</sup> And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the passover?" <sup>13</sup> And he sent two of his disciples, and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, <sup>14</sup> and wherever he enters, say to the householder, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I am to eat the passover with my disciples?' <sup>15</sup> And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us." <sup>16</sup> And the disciples set out and went to the city, and found it as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

<sup>22</sup> And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." <sup>23</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. <sup>24</sup> And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. <sup>25</sup> Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." <sup>26</sup> And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

### **Gospel Focus**

This gospel gives us Mark's account of the institution of the Eucharist. The pattern established here continues at every Mass, we take bread, bless it, break it, and share it. We recall all of Jesus' incredible gifts-the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit, his very death and resurrection. Through him we are given abundant life that cannot be destroyed by death. In the light of all these plentiful gifts we do well to remember that the word Eucharist means "thanks-giving." Giving is the very nature of God; it is what God does and what God is. It is a response of gratitude that God asks of us, and we offer it in the celebration of the Eucharist.

## **Gospel Reflection**

As youngsters, we had ways of sealing the bond of friendship with our best friends. Girls would exchange friendship rings, pledging our undying loyalty to one another. Our brothers would make a small cut on their finger and then mingle their blood with their buddy's to signify the unbreakable bond between them as "blood brothers." Today's reading evoke this symbol of blood bonds that can never be broken.

In the first reading, Moses sprinkles half the blood of a sacrificed animal on the altar and the other half on the people. The blood signifies the life force that seals the commitment between the Holy One and Israel. Not only are God and the people bound together irrevocably but the people themselves are united to one another. The twelve pillars erected at the foot of the mountain represent the whole of the people. They acclaim with one voice their loyalty to all the words and ordinances of God.

In the same way, Jesus' blood shed for all reaffirms God's unbreakable bond with us. What Jesus says and does at the Last Supper is the culmination of an entire lifelong pouring out of himself in love. The words and gestures echo God's life sustaining self-gift to Israel in the wilderness, symbolized in manna (Exod 16:12-35), and Jesus' feeding of the hungry multitudes during his Galilean ministry (Mark 6:30-44; 8:1-9). These continual manifestations of God's commitment to us reach their climax in Jesus' gift of self. In Mark's Gospel, the Last Supper is a Passover meal, recalling how the blood of the lambs smeared on the doorposts kept the fleeing Israelites safe from the destroyer, and how the flesh of the lamb was consumed in haste for the journey to freedom.

So Jesus' flesh and blood sustains, protects, and frees us as a people who then embody for others his unbreakable commitment of love. His blood seals this covenant for all people. Four times in describing the preparation for the meal Mark uses the word *methetai*, "disciples," signifying all the women and men who have followed Jesus and who have ministered with him. In the words over the cup, Jesus says his blood "will be shed for many." This reflects a Hebrew idiom, where the contrast is between "one" and "many." Many does not mean that some are left out; instead, it signifies the totality.

This blood bond is already a reality for us, yet it awaits perfect fulfilment, as Jesus' final words in today's gospel indicate. In our eucharistic gatherings we make present again Jesus' gift of self while we also celebrate a foretaste of the eternal feasting where we will experience perfect oneness with the Holy One and with one another.

## **Old/New Testament and CCC links**

### **First Reading — Exodus 24:3-8**

<sup>3</sup> Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do." <sup>4</sup> And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>5</sup> And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. <sup>7</sup> Then he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." <sup>8</sup> And Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

### **Responsorial Psalm — Ps 116:12-13, 15-16, 17-18**

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

How shall I make a return to the Lord for all the good he has done for me? The cup of salvation I will take up, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. **(R)**

Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones. I am your servant, the son of your handmaid; you have loosed my bonds. **(R)**

To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. My vows to the Lord I will pay in the presence of all his people. **(R)**

## **Second Reading — Hebrews 9:11-15**

<sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

<sup>15</sup> Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.

## **Catechism of The Catholic Church**

**1328.** The inexhaustible richness of this sacrament is expressed in the different names we give it. Each name evokes certain aspects of it. It is called: Eucharist, because it is an action of thanksgiving to God. The Greek words *eucharistein* (Cf. Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24) and *eulogein* (Cf. Mt 26:26; Mk 14:22) recall the Jewish blessings that proclaim - especially during a meal - God's works: creation, redemption, and sanctification.

**1335.** The miracles of the multiplication of the loaves, when the Lord says the blessing, breaks and distributes the loaves through his disciples to feed the multitude, prefigure the superabundance of this unique bread of his Eucharist. (Cf. Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-39) The sign of water turned into wine at Cana already announces the Hour of Jesus' glorification. It makes manifest the fulfillment of the wedding feast in the Father's kingdom, where the faithful will drink the new wine that has become the Blood of Christ. (Cf. Jn 2:11; Mk 14:25)

**1339.** Jesus chose the time of Passover to fulfill what he had announced at Capernaum: giving his disciples his Body and his Blood:

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the passover meal for us, that we may eat it. . . ." They went . . . and prepared the passover. And when the hour came, he sat at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." . . . And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood." (Lk 22:7-20; Cf. Mt 26:17-29; Mk 14:12-25; 1 Cor 11:23-26)

**1376.** The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: "Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation."(Council of Trent (1551): DS 1642; cf. Mt 26:26 ff.; Mk 14:22 ff.; Lk 22:19 ff.; 1 Cor 11:24 ff)

**1403.** At the Last Supper the Lord himself directed his disciples' attention toward the fulfillment of the Passover in the kingdom of God: "I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."(Mt 26:29; cf. Lk 22:18; Mk 14 25) Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist she remembers this promise and turns her gaze "to him who is to come." In her prayer she calls for his coming: "*Marana tha!*" "Come, Lord Jesus!"(Rev 1:4; 22 20; 1 Cor 16 22) "May your grace come and this world pass away!"(Didache 10, 6: SCH 248,180)

### **Sharing and Discussion**

1. What do you understand the word "covenant" to mean? What covenants are you part of? How do you live up your commitment to them?
2. The Eucharist is the real presence (body and blood) of Jesus, how is your relationship with the Eucharist these days? What makes the celebration of the Eucharist especially meaningful for you?
3. The word Eucharist comes from a Greek word that means "thanksgiving." What are you most grateful to God for?

### **Closing Prayer**

**All:** God of hope, your son Jesus came into the world to save us through the sacrifice of his body and blood. Receive our prayers that we too may work to feed others in word, sacrament, and service. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Leader:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

**All:** Amen