

The Solemnity of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ



Order for Liturgy of the Word

Solemnity of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Entrance Antiphon: Leader

He fed them with the finest wheat and satisfied them with honey from the rock.

Cf. Ps 81 (80): 17

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Sisters and Brothers, God desires to converse with us through his Word. Let us bless him for his goodness. Blessed be God forever. **Response:** Blessed be God forever.

Introduction: Leader

We gather today to celebrate the Lord's Day. One with our sisters and brothers and with the entire Church, we will listen to God's Word and join in prayer. So, as we prepare to hear of God's love poured out through Christ, let us acknowledge that He is the source of pardon and strength.

Lord Jesus, you came to reconcile us to one another and to the Father; Lord, have mercy.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of sin and division: Christ, have mercy.

Response: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you intercede for us with your Father; Lord, have mercy.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: In acknowledgement and thanksgiving for God's mercy we offer our praise:

All: The Gloria

Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace to men 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 the 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.

Leader: Let us pray

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

First reading: A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

8:2-3,14b-16a

Moses said to the people: "Remember how for forty years now the LORD, your God, has directed all your journeying in the desert, so as to test you by affliction and find out whether or not it was your intention to keep his commandments. He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your fathers, in order to show you that not by bread alone does one live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the LORD.

"Do not forget the LORD, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery; who guided you through the vast and terrible desert with its saraph serpents and scorpions, its parched and waterless ground; who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock and fed you in the desert with manna, a food unknown to your fathers."

The word of the Lord. **R.** Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

PS 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20

R. (52b) Praise the Lord, Jerusalem

Glorify the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion. For he has strengthened the bars of your gates; he has blessed your children within you. **R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.**

He has granted peace in your borders; with the best of wheat he fills you. He sends forth his command to the earth; swiftly runs his word! **R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.**

He has proclaimed his word to Jacob, his statutes and his ordinances to Israel. He has not done this for any other nation; his ordinances he has not made known to them. Alleluia.

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

Second reading:

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

10:16-17

Brothers and sisters: The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. The word of the Lord. **R.** Thanks be to God

Sequence: Lauda Sion (shorter) form

Lo! the angel's food is given to the pilgrim who has striven; see the children's bread from heaven, which on dogs may not be spent. Truth the ancient types fulfilling, Isaac bound, a victim willing, Paschal lamb, its lifeblood spilling, manna to the fathers sent. Very bread, good shepherd, tend us, Jesu, of your love befriend us, You refresh us, you defend us, Your eternal goodness send us in the land of life to see. You who all things can and know, Who on earth such food bestow, Grant us with your saints, though lowest, Where the heav'nly feast you show, Fellow heirs and guests to be. Amen. Alleluia.

Gospel acclamation:

R. Alleluia, alleluia

I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord; whoever eats this bread will live forever. **R.** Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel proclamation:

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

6:51-58

Jesus said to the Jewish crowds: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever."

The Gospel of the Lord. **R.** Praise to you, lord Jesus Christ.

Having listened to God's word in these passages from Holy Scripture we now profess our faith in all that He has revealed:

All—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,
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.

Prayers of the Faithful—Leader

Introduction: Lord, you nourish us with your Body and Blood and see to our needs. Mindful of this we now place our petitions before you:

Intentions: For the Church: that through our sharing in the Eucharist, we may be transformed more and more into the Body of Christ; we pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For our parish, many members but one body: that we may be a people of deep gratitude and allow God to continue to build us into a community of faith and love; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who cannot receive the Eucharist at this time: that God will nourish them by making his presence known to them through others; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For the women and men who were recently baptized and brought into communion with the Church: may they become known to us and us, to them; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who are ill and anxious about health during this time: may they be nourished by the manna of God's Word and find peace, comfort, and courage; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who have died: may they now dine at the heavenly banquet with our Lord; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

Prayer: Eternal God, nourished by your very life, let your face shine upon us and through us, so that we in turn may radiate your love and joy to others. For this and all the prayers we have offered we ask through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Leader: Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Leader: With the love of Christ, let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Leader: Communion Antiphon: Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him, says the Lord. **Jn 6:57**

All—Spiritual Communion:

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.

Leader: 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.

Response: Amen.

Blessing—making the sign of the cross:

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us, and bring us to everlasting life.

Response: Amen.

Leader: Let us go in peace.

Response: Thanks be to God.

This Sunday is the last special celebration in the wake of Easter. Not that we are still in the Easter season—it ended on Pentecost. But still, this Sunday is the capstone of all the celebrations since Holy Week. It gives us the last very important matter that still needs to come before us: the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Let us review the essence of Christianity as shown in our previous celebrations.

Holy Week: On Holy Thursday we saw Jesus washing the disciples' feet. On *Good Friday* we watched Jesus as he chose the cross instead of "saving himself." This is the highest example of real, lasting love we know of. It showed us who God is and showed it in the flesh.

Easter: His life had been lost but love could not be lost. So love returned him to life.

The *Sundays after Easter:* Jesus explained his sacrifice and his rising and their connection with the Father's love for the world. Thanks be to God he did explain, because it is not the easiest thing to understand.

The *Ascension:* Jesus went away, back to the Father. He had come forth from the Trinity and now was completing the circle. But also he was making a home there for us. The Trinity works this way: by giving love (Incarnation) and returning love (Cross, Resurrection).

It was wonderful, but what if it were the end of the story? We would have only memories.

Pentecost: No, he is staying with us in the most important way possible. He is sending the inside of his life, the Holy Spirit, into our hearts. Christ's heart would become our own heart and by this we would become his new and continuing body for the life of the world. With spiritual eyes we would see that the Holy Trinity is made of love and that our lives are included in that love.

The Body and Blood of Christ: Some people feel vaguely dissatisfied with the Holy Spirit. They want to touch her/him. And, since we live in a material world, how can some spirit way down deep inside us cope with materiality? Besides, we sin, often, and by doing so we oust the Spirit, or at least hide it. Moreover, even though we have the Spirit, we often forget about Jesus' life, death and resurrection. So he gives us himself in bodily form. Jesus gives himself as bread, even as God gave manna to the Israelites. After the table of the Word, we move to the table of the Eucharist, where he gives his fleshly body and blood to our fleshly body and blood.

This sacrament is the way we join in the physical life of Christ. His body becomes one with our bodies in an intimate transformation. This is a parallel to the way the Holy Spirit comes together with our spirit. This week's feast of feeding is a bodily sending of us out into the physical/spiritual world to bring Christ to it.

This is the capstone of the mighty season of the Lord's coming among us to feed us, to suffer with us, to die with us, and to bring all life back to its arch-original source, God-love.

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Art: *Mass at Bolsena*, by Rafael, Vatican Museum; Rome, Italy