

“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.” Words from our Gospel today from the 6th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John – sisters and brothers, may the Lord give to you his peace and his joy.

“We’re all together again, we’re here we’re here. We’re all together again, we’re here we’re here. And who knows when we’ll be altogether again, singing altogether again, we’re here we’re here.” My grandfather used to sing that little ditty around our family campfires. It was a song that lends some perspective regarding the uncertainties of life but also celebrated the significance of the present moment. Indeed, it’s so good to be with you here together again to celebrate the Eucharist, especially as we gather on this feast of Corpus Christi, the feast of the most precious Body and Blood of Christ. Speaking of grandfathers, there was a grandfather who one evening told his grandson a story about a battle that rages on inside of all people. He said, "Mi nieto, my grandson, the battle is between two "wolves" that live inside us all. One wolf is Evil. It feeds on anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other wolf is Good. It lives on joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith." The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins the battle going on inside of me?" The grandfather simply replied, "The one that you feed."

We come once again to feed upon Christ himself so as to strengthen and nourish the good inside all of us so that we may conquer evil as we make our way through life. It has been tough, not being able to celebrate the Eucharist with you all. Thank you for understanding that just as important as it is to find true nourishment for ourselves, we also cannot afford to feed the evil wolf so to speak, that we have a moral obligation also to care for the well-being of others, which is why we are sitting here today with masks on and maintaining a distance from each other still. Practically speaking, I suppose it’s not much different from the days of old, when the reception of communion by the faithful was rare as many people did not believe themselves worthy to approach the Eucharistic Table. And yet, they found that by participating in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, they could yet join themselves to Christ and receive the consolation and strength they needed from the Lord. Many have told me, that even though we couldn’t be together at this sacrificial meal, the fact that they could come to Church for Eucharistic Adoration, and come into the very presence of Christ is what helped them cope with the craziness of the world in which we live. I couldn’t agree more, and we were quite happy to leave the Church open for everyone to this end, and our adoration chapel remains open for you here around the clock every day.

But it's certainly appropriate that as we come together once again, we can celebrate this feast of Corpus Christi. Jesus himself leads us in understanding the importance of the Eucharist on this feast, when he gives the bread of life discourse, using the memory of the Jewish people as a springboard for this discussion. You see, remembering for Jews doesn't mean recalling but rather actualizing the past in the here and now, making the past come alive in the present so to speak. The example Jesus uses throughout his discourse is the Exodus experience which is a significant event, perhaps the most significant event, of Jewish history. The Israelites wandered for many years in the dangerous, desert wilderness, but came to discover there that God was leading them and providing for their every need. It was a difficult but also intimate moment in their history. And yet, the journey in the desert did not merely end when they arrived at the Promised Land. Every time Jews participate in the Passover, even today, they are themselves drawn into that desert moment and personally experience God's providence in the here and now. Just as their ancestors knew they were cared for when God gave them the bread-like substance of manna every day, so the present generations could know for themselves how they too can rely on the providence of God to carry them through the difficulties of their own lives. Manna thus became Jesus' springboard to say that just as you have fed on manna, this bread from heaven, to remember God's grace, to actualize his grace every time you celebrate Passover, so then everyone who feeds on Christ would likewise receive that divine life, but unlike your ancestors who ate manna and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever, because it is God himself that we are partaking in and not mere bread.

So it is with the celebration of the Eucharist today, which we do in remembrance of Christ. All that Jesus said and did for us then, we are actualizing here and now. Jesus teaching through the Scriptures – fulfilled in our hearing. Jesus conquering sin and death through the cross to the resurrection – happening before our very eyes. That Jesus was intimately present to his disciples, sharing his heart with them and serving them at the Last Supper – so is Jesus really present to us in the breaking of the bread. It's not just a symbol. It's not merely a recalling of the past. "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?" Indeed, the Eucharist is an actualization of God in the present, where in this Sacrament Jesus Christ becomes intimately present to us, procures God's mercy for us in our own difficulties, and gives us the Spirit to remain with us always, dwelling within us now, just as he did for those first disciples all those years ago... Our hearts are restless. There is a battle going on inside of us, but every other food we reach out to fails to satisfy. So come to this table, feed the good wolf inside of you, feed on Jesus himself and none other, that you may not perish in this battle but have life and have it to the full.

Readings: <http://usccb.org/bible/readings/061420.cfm>

Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ

Lectionary: 167

Reading 1DT 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."

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

R. (12) **Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

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.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

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.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

He has proclaimed his word to Jacob,
his statutes and his ordinances to Israel.

He has not done thus for any other nation;
his ordinances he has not made known to them. Alleluia.

R. **Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

Reading 21 COR 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.

Sequence

Lauda Sion

Laud, O Zion, your salvation,
Laud with hymns of exultation,
Christ, your king and shepherd true:

Bring him all the praise you know,
He is more than you bestow.
Never can you reach his due.

Special theme for glad thanksgiving
Is the quick'ning and the living
Bread today before you set:

From his hands of old partaken,
As we know, by faith unshaken,
Where the Twelve at supper met.

Full and clear ring out your chanting,
Joy nor sweetest grace be wanting,
From your heart let praises burst:

For today the feast is holden,
When the institution olden
Of that supper was rehearsed.

Here the new law's new oblation,
By the new king's revelation,
Ends the form of ancient rite:

Now the new the old effaces,
Truth away the shadow chases,
Light dispels the gloom of night.

What he did at supper seated,
Christ ordained to be repeated,
His memorial ne'er to cease:

And his rule for guidance taking,
Bread and wine we hallow, making
Thus our sacrifice of peace.

This the truth each Christian learns,
Bread into his flesh he turns,
To his precious blood the wine:

Sight has fail'd, nor thought conceives,
But a dauntless faith believes,
Resting on a pow'r divine.

Here beneath these signs are hidden
Priceless things to sense forbidden;
Signs, not things are all we see:

Blood is poured and flesh is broken,
Yet in either wondrous token
Christ entire we know to be.

Whoso of this food partakes,
Does not rend the Lord nor breaks;
Christ is whole to all that taste:

Thousands are, as one, receivers,
One, as thousands of believers,
Eats of him who cannot waste.

Bad and good the feast are sharing,
Of what divers dooms preparing,
Endless death, or endless life.

Life to these, to those damnation,
See how like participation
Is with unlike issues rife.

When the sacrament is broken,
Doubt not, but believe 'tis spoken,
That each sever'd outward token
doth the very whole contain.

Nought the precious gift divides,
Breaking but the sign betides
Jesus still the same abides,
still unbroken does remain.

The shorter form of the sequence begins here.

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.

Alleluia [JN 6:51](#)

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 [JN 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."