

MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

June 14, 2020 Cycle A

Facilitator: *Let us take a minute to consciously acknowledge that we are in the presence of God and ask him to help us to hear the Word he wants us to hear this week.*

Pause for a moment and then play a religious song.

Opening prayer: *Lord Jesus Christ, we worship you living among us in the sacrament of your Body and Blood. May we offer to our Father in heaven a solemn pledge of undivided love. May we offer to our brothers and sisters a life poured out in loving service of that Kingdom where you live with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Response to last week's Word: [Facilitator briefly recalls last week's Gospel.] *Let us spend a few minutes sharing how the Word we heard God speak to us last week has unfolded in our lives during the week.*

Facilitator reads focus statement: Each of today's readings illuminates some aspect of today's feast. Each reading points to the Eucharist as the heavenly bread that feeds us in life's journey.

Let us listen to God's Word to hear what it is he wants to say to us in these readings today. As you hear a word, you may want to underline it or write it down to remember.

Read the first reading, the psalm and the second reading, pausing briefly after each one.

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14-16

This reading is intended as a reminder to the people of Israel of how God fed them in the desert with manna, miraculous food which Christians would later see as a prefiguration of the Eucharist. In this sermon, Moses seeks to remind his people that they are not to live on bread alone but on every Word that comes forth from the mouth of God. The author of this book, writing hundreds of years after the desert event, issues a strong reminder that just as Israel relied on manna for life in the desert, so the people now must continually depend on the Word of God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 147

Most likely, this psalm of praise is chosen for its reference to the wheat with which God fills his people.

SECOND READING: 1Corinthians 10:16-17

Paul is writing to a community that is experiencing a lot of division. He uses the Eucharist, which is the celebration of Christian unity, to appeal to the Corinthians to work for and maintain unity. The Eucharist unites us with Christ and with each other and commits believers to work for unity with Christ and with each other.

PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL: John 6:21-58

As we listen to this first reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our minds for the content.

**A participant reads the Gospel,
then all pause to reflect.**

As we listen to this second reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our hearts to what Jesus is saying to us. Be aware of what draws us in and what part of the Gospel might be a challenge to embrace. You may want to underline or write down the word you hear.

GOSPEL: John 6:51-58

The culmination of Jesus 'Bread of Life' discourse in these verses sends a bold promise of eternal life for all who believe in him and partake of his presence in the Eucharist. In unmistakable language, Jesus identifies himself with the elements of our eucharistic sacrifice, namely, the bread and wine. We feed on Jesus by believing or "taking in" his Word and acting on it, and by believing in and 'taking in' his divine presence in the bread and wine. Just as we and the substances we eat and drink become one, so Jesus and those who feed on him form an intimate union.

Jesus does not only visit those who feed on him, but he also dwells in them permanently. The reading

concludes with a contrast between Jesus and the manna which the Israelites received. Jesus, not the manna, is the Bread that came, not from the sky but from the very being of God. Those who ate manna died; those who feed on Jesus will live forever.

FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Turn to the person next to you and share what verse or image in the readings caught your attention or drew you in. Was there a verse or aspect of the readings that challenged you?

The facilitator can decide which is more helpful: to share the next questions with the whole group, or to share in smaller groups of three or four.

2. In the first reading, Moses exhorts his people to feed on the Word of God. What keeps people from acting on this exhortation? What motivates you to do it?

3. In the second reading, Paul tells us that participation in the Eucharist implies a commitment to living a Christ-centered life. What for you is the biggest help and obstacle to doing this?

4. How has your understanding of the participation in the Eucharist changed or developed over the years?

5. What causes so many people raised Catholic to lose faith in the Eucharist? What helps you to keep faith in the Eucharist?

6. Name one thing today's Gospel says to us that we disciples of Jesus need to heed and act on.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Share with the person next to you one way you can act on this week's readings. Suggestion: The Eucharist calls us to be eucharist for others. Be attentive to how you can give and share life with others.

JOURNALING. *Having listened to God's Word and listened to others' reflections on it, take a quiet moment to reflect on what you are hearing God say to you. Your response will be what you bring to Eucharist on Sunday, asking Jesus to help you respond as he asks of you. When ready, jot down your reflections.*

PRAYING WITH THE WORD

Facilitator: Let us now pause to see how something(s) said in the reading might lead us into shared prayer. Suggestion: *Jesus, thank you for being heavenly food and drink for our faith journey. Open the eyes of our hearts to this special presence.*

CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, PETITION AND INTERCESSION

Facilitator: What are we grateful for? For what and for whom do we need to pray? Especially pray for persecuted Christians, and for a new awakening to Jesus' presence in the Eucharist.

CLOSING PRAYER (together)

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear me.

Within your wounds hide me.

Separated from you let me never be.

From the Evil One, protect me.

At the hour of my death, call me.

And close to you bid me.

*That with your saints I may be praising you
forever and ever.*

Amen.