



Bringing Home the Word †

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) (A)

June 11, 2023

Take and Eat

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Many of us are little different from the Jewish crowds who cried out: “How can this man give us [his] flesh to eat?” (John 6:52). Jesus does not explain how the bread was really his flesh. What he did was underscore the importance of eating this bread, which was his flesh. He then goes on and insists that we must drink his blood as well. If these were hard sayings for the people of Israel, who in their ancient past might have shared the flesh and blood of a sacrificed animal, what are we “sophisticated” contemporary Christians to make of it?

The people of Jesus’ time would have recognized several elements from their traditions in Jesus’ discourse, but his reinterpretation of them would have startled them. Like the victim of an ancient holocaust offering, Jesus’ blood is shed. However, it is not poured around the altar; it is to be consumed. Bread from heaven recalled the manna that fed their ancestors in the wilderness. However, the manna lasted for only a day; it then rotted. The bread Jesus gives is living bread that enables those who eat it to live forever. This is a lot to believe. But then, that is exactly what we are asked to do. We might have correct theological language to explain how this transformation takes place, but we still will not understand the mystery to which it points. So what are we to do? Very simply: take and eat! †

Sunday Readings

Deuteronomy 8:2–3, 14b–16a

He...let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your fathers.

1 Corinthians 10:16–17

We, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

John 6:51–58

[Jesus said,] “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.”

The bread Jesus gives is living bread that enables those who eat it to live forever.



A Word from Pope Francis

It is the Church that makes the Eucharist, but it is more fundamental that the Eucharist makes the Church.... This is the mystery of communion, of the Eucharist: receiving Jesus so He may transform us from within, and receiving Jesus so that He may create unity in us and not division.

ANGELUS, ROME, JUNE 14, 2020



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What or who nourishes my best self?
- Am I tempted, enslaved, or weakened by less-satisfying “foods”?

We Are What We Eat

Paige Byrne Shortal

Let's play a game. Can you name the homograph (same word, different meaning) for each of the following: the sound a dog makes and the outside of a tree; opposite of heavy or opposite of dark; building where money is kept or the sides of a river; when somebody goes away or parts of a tree; a place for stray animals or sixteen ounces.

If you answered, "bark, light, bank, leaves, pound," you win!

What if I asked for the homographic phrase for Consecrated Bread or Christian Community?

That's right, it's "Body of Christ." Jesus uses the same word, "Body"—*soma* in Greek—when he takes bread and states, "This is my body." St. Paul also uses *soma* in his letter to the Corinthians: "Now you are the Body of Christ...."

The bark of a tree and a dog's bark are coincidental homographs. They aren't related to each other. Not so with *soma*. Without the Body of Christ as the Eucharistic Bread, there is no Body of Christ as Community. And without the Community there is no Eucharist. Each is dependent on the other.

When we emphasize the Body of Christ as the Eucharistic Bread or Blessed Sacrament, we have what is called a "high" theology, Christology, and ecclesiology. [Theology: study



of God (*theos*); Christology: study of Christ; ecclesiology: study of the church (*ekklesia*).] This "vertical spirituality" celebrates the awesomeness of God; the majestic Christ who is King of all Creation; a glorious Church that transcends this world.

When we emphasize the Body of Christ as Community, we are engaged in "low" theology, Christology and ecclesiology, and a "horizontal spirituality." God is near; Jesus is our brother who walks with us; the Church is fully engaged in the suffering of this world.

Never imagine that you must choose. Both are equally true. We are, literally, what we eat. We consume and venerate the Real Presence, the Body of Christ in the Eucharist so that we can be the Body of Christ as Community, present as Christ in this World. †

What is Spiritual Communion?

Fr. Richard N. Fragomeni

Spiritual Communion is a form of yearning for communion with Christ when sacramental Communion is not possible due to illness, infirmity, or other factors. A Roman Catholic, or any Christian for that matter, who has a desire for union with Christ and who wishes a Spiritual Communion with the Lord should pause for a moment of recollection to remember and give thanks for the love Jesus revealed to us. Then pray, either a spontaneous prayer or this prayer, written by St. Alphonsus Liguori:

"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." †



*God of abundance,
give us the grace to humbly and
gratefully receive the Eucharist
as our food for eternal life.
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

The Redemptorists

**Without the Body of Christ as the Eucharistic Bread,
there is no Body of Christ as Community.**

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 12–17

Monday, Weekday:

2 Cor 1:1–7 / Mt 5:1–12

Tuesday, St. Anthony of Padua:

2 Cor 1:18–22 / Mt 5:13–16

Wednesday, Weekday:

2 Cor 3:4–11 / Mt 5:17–19

Thursday, Weekday:

2 Cor 3:15–4:1, 3–6 / Mt 5:20–26

Friday, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus:

Dt 7:6–11 / 1 Jn 4:7–16 / Mt 11:25–30

Saturday, Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary: 2 Cor 5:14–21 / Lk 2:41–51

Bringing Home
the **Word** 

June 11, 2023

© 2023 Liguori Publications, a ministry of the Redemptorists. One Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057. Scripture quotations in this publication are from the *New American Bible*, revised edition, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC. The Pope Francis quotation is used with permission and copyright © 2020 *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. All rights reserved. 1-800-325-9521. Liguori.org.