



Bringing Home the Word

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (B)

June 2, 2024

Take This: Eat and Drink

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

We are a people who ritualize life's important events. We insist on birthday cakes; we dream about ostentatious weddings; we go over the top on Super Bowl Sunday. If certain rituals are not included in these celebrations, the profound meaning of the event seems compromised.

Today's readings speak of blood rituals. Since life is in the blood (see Leviticus 17:11), the meaning of the ritual is contained in the meaning of the blood. In the reading from Exodus, young bulls are sacrificed at the height of their virility. In this way, not only the life of the bulls, but

their future of youthful strength, is offered to God, who is the source of life. A visible sign of this offering—sacrificial blood—is sprinkled on the people signifying that, joined to the bulls through this blood, they too are offered to God. Furthermore, the sacrificial blood seals the covenant bond that joins the people to God.

All of these elements are new in the Letter to the Hebrews. There is a new sacrificial victim, Christ. There's a new power in the blood—the ability to obtain eternal redemption, a New Covenant that promises an eternal inheritance. The Gospel reading describes how we might participate in this ritual and benefit from its wondrous power.

The feast we celebrate today invites us to participate in the ritual it commemorates. Its sacrificial elements are rudimentary nourishments of life, bread and wine. They become the Body and Blood of Christ. All we have to do is draw near with faith, eat, and drink. †

Sunday Readings

Exodus 24:3–8

[Moses] took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you."

Hebrews 9:11–15

He entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.

Mark 14:12–16, 22–26

[Jesus said,] "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many."

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A Word from Pope Francis

As we are nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ, we are assimilated with him; we receive his love within us, not to hold it back selfishly, but rather to share it with others. This logic is inscribed in the Eucharist: we receive his love within us and we share it with others. This is the Eucharistic logic.

ANGELUS, ROME, JUNE 3, 2018



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do you know that the word "Eucharist" means "giving thanks"?
- How grateful are you for the privilege to receive holy Communion?

The Gift of Christ's Love for Us

David Werthmann

Think of a close friend or relative who has moved to a different city. How has that loss felt? Before the move, perhaps you exchanged small gifts by which to remember each other. Similarly, Jesus did not want to leave us alone after his ascension to heaven because he realized we would need his frequent help, so he left behind the Eucharist by which we could recall him, saying, "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:24). We should also feel blessed by his continual presence here because he affirmed, "I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).



Those who travel to the Holy Land and visit places like the cave of the

Nativity or the hill of Calvary where Jesus was crucified are often overcome with emotion as they imagine being present at the very sites where Jesus is believed to have lived. We can visit him today, still alive and present, in the Blessed Sacrament. We can spend time in the Real Presence of God whenever we stop by, even briefly, wherever the Eucharist is reserved. Christ still lives among us today.

What does belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist mean for you? How does your life witness the true presence of Christ to those you encounter each day? †

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From "The Real Presence: Jesus' Gift to the Church" by John Feister

Why does it still look like bread and wine? This is perhaps the greatest stumbling block for belief in the Real Presence. The Church teaches that the transformation into the Body and Blood of Christ is taking place "below the surface"—that is, in the "substance" of the bread and wine. What can be seen, tasted, touched, and smelled is indeed the same as the bread and wine. But there has been a real change that requires faith to accept. Medieval theologians, following the inspired genius of St. Thomas Aquinas, talked of this transformation using the word "transubstantiation," a technical theological term of that era. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* discusses this term in section 1376. In brief, we Catholics believe that, at their deepest reality, although not in physical characteristics, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ when they are consecrated. After consecration, they are no longer bread and wine: they are the Body and Blood of Christ. "As St. Thomas Aquinas observed, Christ is not quoted as saying, 'This bread is my body,' but 'This is my body.'" †

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PRAYER

God of abundance,
as we are fed at the
banquet of the Eucharist,
may we be attentive to
the hungers of those
we encounter today.
We pray in Jesus' name.
Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 3–8

Monday, St. Charles Lwanga and Companions: 2 Pt 1:2–7 / Mk 12:1–12

Tuesday, Weekday:
2 Pt 3:12–15a, 17–18 / Mk 12:13–17

Wednesday, St. Boniface:
2 Tm 1:1–3, 6–12 / Mk 12:18–27

Thursday, Weekday:
2 Tm 2:8–15 / Mk 12:28–34

Friday, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus: Hos 11:1, 3–4, 8c–9 / Eph 3:8–12, 14–19 / Jn 19:31–37

Saturday, Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary: 2 Tm 4:1–8 / Lk 2:41–51

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