

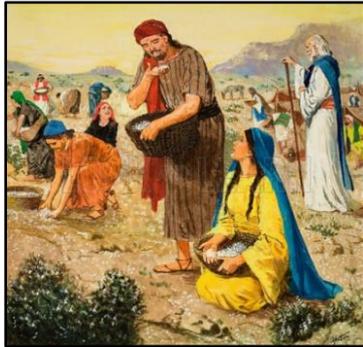
## READINGS AND REFLECTION

### FOR THE FEAST OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

(from the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference Mass Readings <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/readings/> )

#### FIRST READING - FROM THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY **8:2-3. 14-16**

*He fed you with manna which neither you nor your fathers had known.*



**Moses** said to the people:

'Remember how the Lord your God led you for forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, to test you and know your inmost heart – whether you would keep his commandments or not.

He humbled you, he made you feel hunger, he fed you with manna which neither you nor your fathers had known, to make you understand that man does not live on bread alone but on everything that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Do not become proud of heart.

Do not then forget the Lord your God

who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery;

who led you through this vast dreadful wilderness, with fiery serpents, scorpions and thirst; who in this waterless place brought you water from the hardest rock;

who in this wilderness fed you with manna that your fathers had not known,

to humble you and test you and so make your future the happier.

The Word of the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** PS 147

**RESPONSE:** O PRAISE THE LORD, JERUSALEM!

1. O praise the Lord, Jerusalem! Zion, praise your God!

He has strengthened the bars of your gates.

He has blessed the children within you. *O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!*

2. He established peace on your borders. He feeds you with finest wheat.

He sends out his word to the earth

and swiftly runs his command. *O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!*

3. He makes his word known to Jacob, to Israel his laws and decrees.  
He has not dealt thus with other nations.  
He has not taught them his decrees. *O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!*

**A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS 10:16-17**  
*There is only one loaf means that, though there are many of us, we form a single body*

The blessing-cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ,  
and the bread that we break is a communion with the body of Christ.  
The fact that there is only one loaf means that,  
though there are many of us,  
we form a single body because we all have a share in this one loaf.

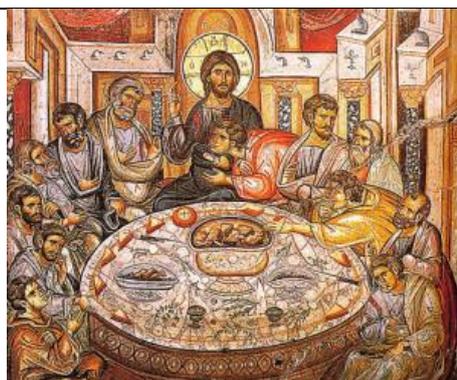
The Word of the Lord.

**SEQUENCE FOR CORPUS CHRISTI**

**COME THEN, GOOD SHEPHERD, BREAD DIVINE,  
STILL SHOW TO US YOUR MERCY SIGN;  
FEED US STILL, KEEP US STILL THINE;  
SO MAY WE SEE YOUR GLORIES SHINE  
IN FIELDS OF IMMORTALITY;**

**YOU ARE THE WISEST, MIGHTIEST, BEST,  
OUR PRESENT FOOD, OUR FUTURE REST,  
COME, MAKE US EACH YOUR CHOSEN GUEST,  
CO-HEIRS OF YOURS, AND FRIENDS BLESSED WITH SAINTS  
WHOSE DWELLING IS WITH THEE.**

I am the living bread  
which has come down from heaven  
says the Lord.  
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.  
*Jn 6: 51-52*



Jesus said to the Jews:

I am the living bread which has come down from heaven.

Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

The bread that I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world.'

Then the Jews started arguing with one another:

'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' they said.

Jesus replied, 'I tell you most solemnly,  
if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,  
you will not have life in you.

Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life,  
and I shall raise him up on the last day.

For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.

He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him.

As I, who am sent by the living Father, draw life from the Father,  
so whoever eats me will draw life from me.

This is the bread come down from heaven;  
not like the bread our ancestors ate:  
they are dead,

but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

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#### **REFLECTION**

Once when the Duke of Wellington took Holy Communion at his Parish Church, a very poor old man walked up the aisle, and on reaching the Altar, knelt beside the Duke. Tension and commotion disrupted the silence in the Church. Someone came to touch the poor man on his shoulder, and whispered asking him to move farther away, or to rise and wait until after the Duke had received the Bread and the Wine. However, the eagle eye and the quick ear of the great Commander caught the meaning of that touch and that whisper. He clasped the old man's hand and held him to prevent his rising. In a reverential but distinct undertone, the Duke said, "Do not move; we all are equal here."

Jesus offers himself as bread to us as life for eternity. People in all demographics have always been vulnerable in life - hungry for respect, justice, friendship, love, spiritual insight and strength, safety, domestic security, health, education, work, civil rights, etc.. Throughout the CoVid crisis, vulnerability has non-discriminatorily visited the self-assured as well as those with less secure incomes, the elderly, the sick and the essential workers.

With what interiority might we negotiate difficulties on our journeys, envision our purpose, build a better world and perceive the end in life?

Today's Solemnity encourages us to think about our relationship with God for which the Eucharist is real food and real drink for us on our journeys. Encountering Christ in the Eucharist is our encounter with the Paschal Mystery of Christ Risen offering us deep contexts for our identity, for the choices we make and for our resilience as we negotiate difficulties ranging from those in our own lives to those with a global impact.

This Solemnity also helps us think about the future. How can we allow our being in communion in Christ and our belonging with our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ, through the Spirit, shape our roles in the continuing mission of Jesus in our world? With our gifts and vocations, can we offer our world glimpses of the heavenly banquet where 'in God's sight, *all are equal*', as the Duke of Wellington assured the poor, old man?

Profound theological concepts underpin our understanding of "The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ" – the Hebrews' Passover, our Memorial of the Last Supper, the Real Presence of Christ Risen, the Hebrews' notions of Sacrifice, the Sacrifice of Jesus, Sacramentality, the Body of Christ, the Mass as Liturgy...

These are wonderful ideas which will enrich and inspire our understanding of the Eucharist and our celebration of the Mass. However, ideas, doctrines and arguments alone will not sustain our faith. Let us pray for the gift of personal and communal encounters with the Divine and experiences of the Holy. Let us pray for dynamic, first-hand and experiential relationships of faith in God. Enriched by learning as well, may our personal and communal faith affect our ordinary awareness, inspire and sustain us in creating new ways of living and energize every dimension of our lives.

A privilege we have is to pray for those who have no one to pray for them and for those whose minds or pain limit their capacity to pray. They belong with us in Christ.