

Prayerful preparation for The Body & Blood of Christ

John 6:51-58 *My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.*

Jesus said to the crowd:

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

Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;
and 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
myself 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.’

Prayer Prompts

- Which is your favourite Communion Hymn? The first one you remember, your favourite now? You can enter the title in YouTube and find many. Sing it, read the lyrics, see where it takes you. Hum it during the day.
- Lectio Divina, using the gospel or the words the priest says over the bread and wine.
- Go on a prayerful walk, even if only in your garden, or along pavements. Contemplate God's creation. Try to appreciate God's beauty, power, wisdom, goodness, love.
- Do you believe that it is more important to go to Mass on Sunday or to be reconciled with your brothers and sister? Is there anyone you are not reconciled with? Is there anything you need to do to try to effect a reconciliation? Use the 7 questions and apply them to the above. The 7 questions are What, Where, Why, How, Who, Where and what Help do I need.

References

Prayer and Temperament. C.P. Michael & M.C. Norrissey.

Credo a Catholic Catechism - English Translation. Sister B.D. Davies OSU.

Reflection

I remember Corpus Christi in the 1950's, processions in white dresses, red ties for the boys. Strewing petals before the priests as they carried the Blessed Sacrament, hymns sung outdoors. Nostalgic for times past?

Maybe something has been lost/changed but what has been gained?

Initially the laity had been allowed to receive under both kinds but in the Middle Ages it was changed and laity were only allowed to receive the one form of the Eucharist. This changed back with Vatican 2 in the 1960's and remains the norm today with priest and people receiving under both kinds.

Is this just an interesting piece of Church history or is there much for us to learn from present custom? Body/ Flesh and Blood. How do you understand this mystery?

Has custom and familiarity with the event that takes place at every Mass made stale the awe, wonder, praise and thanksgiving for this gift Jesus left us? How do you understand the terms Flesh and Blood?

In the book Credo the authors explain body as meaning the whole person, Jesus is saying 'This is myself'. Blood is explained as the source of life so Jesus is saying 'This is my life which will be given for you'. So by partaking in the Eucharist we believe we are receiving Jesus completely, incorporating Him and remembering the sacrifice He made for us of this life.

We are also being told to 'Do this in remembrance of me', i.e. become like Jesus, model our lives on Jesus, come to the Father by copying Jesus, receive the Spirit of God to live the life we were created for.

The Eucharist looks to the past, present and future.

In the past, The Last Supper is recalled, Jesus' last meal with His friends, and what a mixed bunch they were! One to betray Him, all to abandon Him in the Garden, none to fully understand Him.

In the present here in our parishes, we are invited to participate in a meal with our fellow pilgrims, sinners one and all, undeserving yet graced to receive. Time and time again the Father gives the gift of His Son. He gives to each one of us the gift to see in Jesus another human being exactly like what God has in mind for each of us. Can there be a better gift to receive?

The future is for us to accept this potentially transforming gift which can enable the ordinariness of our daily lives to be transformed and shot through with God's loving presence, pointing us to even closer union with the Trinity.

The Eucharist is indeed a rich gift.