

Sunday, June 3, 2018

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

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading Exodus 24:3-8

Responsorial: Psalm 116:12-13, 15-18

2nd Reading: Hebrews 9:11-15

Gospel: Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

This is my body. (Mark 14:22)

It's a well-known saying: *We are what we eat*. But what happens when we take that saying and apply it to our spiritual lives as well as our physical lives? Something wonderful: when we eat the Body of Christ, we become the body of Christ. We are joined with him and with each other. Here are some of the effects of this marvelous truth:

The Body of Christ gives us peace. At the Last Supper, Jesus promised, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you" and "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (John 14:27). Just a short time later, Jesus himself demonstrated that peace as he was arrested, tried, tortured, and crucified. And because of his peace, his Body and Blood can fill us with peace, no matter what we face.

The Eucharist deepens our relationship with Jesus. At the Last Supper, Jesus said, "I have called you friends" and "No one has greater love than . . . to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:15, 13). Every time we receive the Eucharist, Jesus reminds us that he gave up his life for us because he loves us.

The Eucharist helps us to see him more clearly. Isn't that what happened when Jesus broke bread with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:30)? Or when he multiplied the loaves of bread for the people (John 6:14)? Every time we receive the Eucharist, we grow a little bit closer to the Lord.

The Eucharist not only opens our eyes to Jesus, it opens our eyes to one another. Jesus told us that when we give to the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless, and anyone else in need, we are doing it to him (Matthew 25:35-40). We are meeting him in the poor, just as we meet him in the Eucharist.

So as we celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi today, take a moment to reflect on all the blessings Jesus gives you every time you eat his Body and drink his Blood.

"Jesus, all I can say is 'Thank you!'"

(Many thanks to **The Word Among Us** (www.wau.org) for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission.)

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Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion:

1. The first readings describes how the Israelites entered into a special covenant with God at Mt. Sinai. In addition, we are also presented with Old Testament rituals of the sacrificial blood of animals. The reading ends with these words: *Taking the book of the covenant, he read it aloud to the people, who answered, "All that the LORD has said, we will heed and do." Then he (Moses) took the blood and splashed it on the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words of his."*
 - In what ways do the words of this reading pre-figure the Blood of Christ and the New Covenant?
 - How does the covenant made by Moses with the Israelites differ from the New Covenant made by Jesus?
2. The Responsorial Psalm begins with this challenging question: *How shall I make a return to the LORD for all the good he has done for me?* The psalmist then responds to this question: *The cup of salvation I will take up, and I will call upon the name of the LORD.* He goes on to say the following: *"To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving, and I will call upon the name of the LORD. My vows to the LORD I will pay in the presence of all his people."*
 - How would you respond to the question posed by the psalmist at the beginning of the psalm?
 - What are the some ways you can offer a "sacrifice of thanksgiving" to the Lord in your own life?
 - What more can you do to "increase" your offering?
3. The second reading, like the first reading, also reminds us that no longer do we have a covenant though the sacrifice and blood of animals, since Jesus *"entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God."* God's new covenant with us, a covenant of love and intimacy, has been sealed with the Blood of Christ.
 - In what way does this reading describe the differences between the Old and the New Covenant?
 - How would you explain to someone the Father's great love for us in allowing his Son to suffer and shed his blood on the cross for us?
 - In what ways can we also respond to this great love by laying down our lives more fully for Jesus Christ and for one another?
4. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the disciples that his Body and Blood are truly present in the Eucharist: *"Take it; this is my body... This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many."* It is also the symbol and the bond of unity between Christ and his faithful followers who feed on it.
 - How can you further your unity with Christ, and with your fellow Catholics, who also partake of the body and blood of Christ through the Eucharist?
 - How can you further unity with other Christians, who are not Catholics, but who also partake of the body and blood of Christ through the Eucharist (e.g., Lutherans and Orthodox Christians)?
5. The meditation begins with these words: *"It's a well-known saying: We are what we eat. But what happens when we take that saying and apply it to our spiritual lives as well as our physical lives? Something wonderful: when we eat the Body of Christ, we become the body of Christ."* The meditation goes on to describe four "effects of this marvelous truth": 1) *"The Body of Christ gives us peace,"* 2) *"The Eucharist deepens our relationship with Jesus,"* 3) *"The Eucharist helps us to see him more clearly,"* and 4) *"The Eucharist not only opens our eyes to Jesus, it opens our eyes to one another."* The meditation ends with these words: *"So as we celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi today, take a moment to reflect on all the blessings Jesus gives you every time you eat his Body and drink his Blood."*
 - How would you describe how you have experienced the four "effects" described in the meditation?"
 - How would you describe the other "blessings Jesus gives you every time you eat his Body and drink his Blood"?"
 - What additional steps can you take to better prepare yourself to receive Christ in the Eucharist at Mass?
6. Take some time now to pray and thank the Lord for the great gift of his life and presence in the Eucharist, and for the gift of salvation through his Cross. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as the starting point.

"Jesus, all I can say is 'Thank you!'"

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is currently a member of the board of directors of the ChristLife Catholic Ministry for Evangelization (www.christlife.org) and a member of the National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (www.nsc-chariscenter.org). Maurice was also the founding executive director of the National

As posted on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal National Service Committee's website: www.nsc-chariscenter.org

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