

Alleluia, alleluia! *I am the living bread which has come down from heaven, says the Lord. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.*
Alleluia!

Mark 14:12-16,22-26

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, his disciples said to Jesus, 'Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the city and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and say to the owner of the house which he enters, "The Master says: Where is my dining room in which I can eat the Passover with my disciples?" He will show you a large upper room furnished with couches, all prepared. Make the preparations for us there.' The disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and prepared the Passover.

And as they were eating he took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to them. 'Take it,' he said 'this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them, and all drank from it, and he said to them, 'This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many. I tell you solemnly, I shall no drink any more wine until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God.'

After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives.

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant your Church, O Lord, we pray, the gifts of unity and peace, whose signs are to be seen in mystery in the offerings we here present.

Prayer after Communion

Grant, O Lord, we pray, that we may delight for all eternity in that share in your divine life, which is foreshadowed in the present age by our reception of your precious Body and Blood.

THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

Year B

6th June 2021

Body and Blood of Christ for the New Covenant



'Don't chew the host'. That's all I remember from my Holy Communion preparation as a young child. What a shame! All the rich & beautiful imagery telling of this wondrous sacrament, in which we encounter God's redeeming love, only came to me later on in life.

Thomas Merton, that great spiritual writer, puts it succinctly: "*In Communion*" he says, "*I become the Temple of God... Christ born in me - a new Bethlehem, and sacrificed in me - His new Calvary, and risen in me.*"

At the point of Communion, through the power of the Spirit, we are intimately united with the Lord, being offered to His Father & our Father. In Communion, Jesus leads us into the mystery, the life, the fullness of God's infinite love.

May your faith in the Lord, present in Communion, grow ever stronger each day of your lives.

Opening Prayer

O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament have left us a memorial of your Passion, grant us, we pray, so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood that we may always experience in ourselves the fruits of your redemption.

Exodus 24:3-8

Moses went and told the people all the commands of the Lord and all the ordinances. In answer, all the people said with one voice, 'We will observe all the commands that the Lord has decreed.' Moses put all the commands of the Lord into writing, and early next morning he built an altar at the foot of the mountain, with twelve standing-stones for the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he directed certain young Israelites to offer holocausts and to immolate bullocks to the Lord as communion sacrifices. Half of the blood Moses took up and put into basins, the other half he cast on the altar. And taking the Book of the Covenant he read it to the listening people, and they said, 'We will observe all that the Lord has decreed; we will obey.' Then Moses took the blood and cast it towards the people. This' he said 'is the blood of the Covenant that the Lord has made with you, containing all these rules.'

The Book of Exodus tells about the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, the covenant of Sinai and the wandering in the wilderness (1446 – 1406 BC). Today's passage comes directly after Moses had received the Ten Commandments.

Moses presents God's directives to the people, who wholeheartedly accept them. The Lord then enters into covenant with them. The covenant is sealed with the blood of sacrifice which denotes the seriousness of the matter: a life once destroyed cannot be regained, and a covenant thus made cannot be revoked.

Jesus will bring about the New Covenant in his own blood.

Psalm 115(116):12-13,15-18

How can I repay the Lord for his goodness to me?

The cup of salvation I will raise; I will call on the Lord's name.

O precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful.

Your servant, Lord, your servant am I; you have loosened my bonds.

A thanksgiving sacrifice I make; I will call on the Lord's name.

My vows to the Lord I will fulfil before all his people.

Hebrews 9:11-15

Now Christ has come, as the high priest of all the blessings which were to come. He has passed through the greater, the more perfect tent, which is better than the one made by men's hands because it is not of this created order; and he has entered the sanctuary once and for all, taking with him not the blood of goats and bull calves, but his own blood, having won an eternal redemption for us. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer are sprinkled on those who have incurred defilement and they restore the holiness of their outward lives; how much more effectively the blood of Christ, who offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God through the eternal Spirit, can purify our inner self from dead actions so that we do our service to the living God.

He brings a new covenant, as the mediator, only so that the people who were called to an eternal inheritance may actually receive what was promised: his death took place to cancel the sins that infringed the earlier covenant.

The Letter to the Hebrews, composed around 80AD, addressed to a community of Christians which had grown lukewarm in faith, is a deeply theological letter reflecting on the saving work of Christ. In today's passage the author compares the Old Covenant (1st Reading) with the New Covenant brought about by Christ. In the Old, the blood of animals was used to reconcile men and women to God; in the New, Christ offers his own blood. In his death on the Cross, Christ has offered the perfect sacrifice to his Father and we now share in this sacrifice through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

