

“I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’” Words from our second reading today from the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians – sisters and brothers, may the Lord give to you his peace and his joy.

Something that stood out to me when I was on pilgrimage in the Holy Land was the difference between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. These two inland seas are found next to each other in the same hot desert climate, but they couldn’t be more different from one another. Around the appropriately named Dead Sea – there is no life. There is nothing to be found around it - it can’t sustain anything. On the other hand, is the Sea of Galilee to the north. It is surrounded by hills full of foliage and grain, there are fish that live within it, and towns and cities are located around its shores. It is teeming with life. What accounts for this difference? Quite simply, the Sea of Galilee has an outlet. Water flows out of the Sea of Galilee down the Jordan River. Thus, the water is always fresh. The Dead Sea on the other hand, has no outlet. The water has nowhere to go. It becomes stagnant. It absorbs minerals and salts in excess and has no way of getting such toxins out of its system. Therefore, everything about this Sea is dead.

I would say that this is similar to our lives; when we become attached to things like my time, my money, my property, my peace of mind, my opinions, my body, my retirement, my life... when we are more concerned about receiving and holding onto such things rather than giving them out of a concern for others, then we become stagnant and end up pushing life-giving things away. Ultimately, we become dead inside, much like the Dead Sea. I have to wonder, and studies in psychology support this correlation, if many of the feelings of depression that are on the rise are a result of being so intently focused on our own selves. Conversely, when we give of ourselves, life is found. When we give our time and attention and assistance to our family members and friends and even people we don’t know, something wonderful blooms. We all need an outlet for our love, not simply to prevent us from becoming self-absorbed, but for the creation of life and the communities in which such life thrives, much like the Sea of Galilee.

Indeed, the notion of giving, of sharing what we have, that is what stuck out to me in the readings on this feast day of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. In our first reading, after the high priest Melchizedek made an offering to God on Abram’s behalf, Abram realized how blessed his life was. Realizing that he had been undeservedly blessed by a

generous God to whom he owed everything, he shared with Melchizedek 1/10<sup>th</sup> of all that he had in a spirit of gratitude. Similarly, we should share not simply because things are owed, but because we realize that everything we have received is a gift and want to give in turn. And then, there is St. Paul who handed on to the Corinthian Church the sacrifice of Christ celebrated in the Eucharist, a gift that Paul himself at one point was initiated into and continued to participate in time and again. Just as Paul had done in the times of the early Church, we continue to pass this tradition and sacramental celebration from generation to generation even to the present day. All of us here have received the gift of faith. But it is not something only for ourselves, but *it was received with the express purpose of handing it on* and inviting others into this divine communion, that we hope to one-day share fully together in heaven. Don't let your receiving of this faith be in vain. Pass on what you yourself have received. Disciples make disciples. Finally, there is in the Gospel the striking command of Christ in the face of a hungry crowd, "Give them some food yourselves." We might not think that we have much to give – I don't make a lot of money, I don't have a theology degree, I'm so busy and my time is limited as it is, I'm only just scrapping by, what good are 5 loaves and 2 fish for so many people we might ask? But consider for a moment that 5 loaves and 2 fish is more than plenty for one person alone. When these few items were surrendered for the good of all, Jesus multiplied their offering so that everyone had more than enough to eat and there was still food left over. Notice too, in this Gospel, that it was the disciples themselves who did the sharing and set the food before others. As disciples of the Lord, we too are to share what we have with one another. You can do this!

On this feast of Corpus Christi, as we gather around this altar table once more, we realize that it is our Lord Jesus himself who leads us in giving. On this altar, he gives completely of himself for us as we are incorporated into his sacrifice on Calvary's hill, as he offers up his own Body and Blood, as we participate in the Passover and partake of the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, giving us his mercy. In the Eucharist, God gives himself away. Our readings and celebration today remind us not merely to hold on to possessions as our own, but to share what is received. Similarly, we cannot afford to become like the Dead Sea without an outlet to give of ourselves; we were meant for love, and love isn't truly love until it is given away. The mystery and beauty of faith as St. Francis once said, "it is in giving that we receive." Only in sharing do we understand what it truly is, not merely the receiving of the Body and Blood of Christ but the incorporation of ourselves into the Body of Christ, so as to be Christ given for another.

# The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Lectionary: 169

Reading I

Gn 14:18-20

In those days, Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine, and being a priest of God Most High, he blessed Abram with these words:

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,  
the creator of heaven and earth;  
and blessed be God Most High,  
who delivered your foes into your hand."

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 110:1, 2, 3, 4

R (4b) You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

The LORD said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand  
till I make your enemies your footstool."

R You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

The scepter of your power the LORD will stretch forth from Zion:

"Rule in the midst of your enemies."

R You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

"Yours is princely power in the day of your birth, in holy splendor;  
before the daystar, like the dew, I have begotten you."

R You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

The LORD has sworn, and he will not repent:

"You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

R You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

## Reading II

1 Cor 11:23-26

Brothers and sisters:

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,  
that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over,  
took bread, and, after he had given thanks,  
broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying,  
"This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,  
you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

## Sequence

Lauda Sion

Laud, O Zion, your salvation,

Laud with hymns of exultation,

Christ, your king and shepherd true:

Bring him all the praise you know,

He is more than you bestow.

Never can you reach his due.

Special theme for glad thanksgiving

Is the quick'ning and the living

Bread today before you set:

From his hands of old partaken,

As we know, by faith unshaken,  
Where the Twelve at supper met.

Full and clear ring out your chanting,  
Joy nor sweetest grace be wanting,  
From your heart let praises burst:

For today the feast is holden,  
When the institution olden  
Of that supper was rehearsed.

Here the new law's new oblation,  
By the new king's revelation,  
Ends the form of ancient rite:

Now the new the old effaces,  
Truth away the shadow chases,  
Light dispels the gloom of night.

What he did at supper seated,  
Christ ordained to be repeated,  
His memorial ne'er to cease:

And his rule for guidance taking,  
Bread and wine we hallow, making  
Thus our sacrifice of peace.

This the truth each Christian learns,  
Bread into his flesh he turns,  
To his precious blood the wine:

Sight has fail'd, nor thought conceives,  
But a dauntless faith believes,  
    Resting on a pow'r divine.

Here beneath these signs are hidden  
Priceless things to sense forbidden;  
    Signs, not things are all we see:

Blood is poured and flesh is broken,  
Yet in either wondrous token  
    Christ entire we know to be.

Whoso of this food partakes,  
Does not rend the Lord nor breaks;  
    Christ is whole to all that taste:

Thousands are, as one, receivers,  
One, as thousands of believers,  
    Eats of him who cannot waste.

Bad and good the feast are sharing,  
Of what divers dooms preparing,  
    Endless death, or endless life.

Life to these, to those damnation,  
See how like participation  
    Is with unlike issues rife.

When the sacrament is broken,  
Doubt not, but believe 'tis spoken,  
    That each sever'd outward token

doth the very whole contain.

Nought the precious gift divides,  
Breaking but the sign betides  
    Jesus still the same abides,  
    still unbroken does remain.

*The shorter form of the sequence begins here.*

Lo! the angel's food is given  
To the pilgrim who has striven;  
    see the children's bread from heaven,  
    which on dogs may not be spent.

Truth the ancient types fulfilling,  
Isaac bound, a victim willing,  
    Paschal lamb, its lifeblood spilling,  
    manna to the fathers sent.

Very bread, good shepherd, tend us,  
Jesu, of your love befriend us,  
    You refresh us, you defend us,  
    Your eternal goodness send us  
In the land of life to see.

You who all things can and know,  
Who on earth such food bestow,  
    Grant us with your saints, though lowest,  
    Where the heav'nly feast you show,  
Fellow heirs and guests to be. Amen. Alleluia.  
Alleluia

Jn 6:51

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord;  
whoever eats this bread will live forever.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Lk 9:11b-17

Jesus spoke to the crowds about the kingdom of God,  
and he healed those who needed to be cured.

As the day was drawing to a close,  
the Twelve approached him and said,

"Dismiss the crowd

so that they can go to the surrounding villages and farms  
and find lodging and provisions;

for we are in a deserted place here."

He said to them, "Give them some food yourselves."

They replied, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have,  
unless we ourselves go and buy food for all these people."

Now the men there numbered about five thousand.

Then he said to his disciples,

"Have them sit down in groups of about fifty."

They did so and made them all sit down.

Then taking the five loaves and the two fish,  
and looking up to heaven,

he said the blessing over them, broke them,  
and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.

They all ate and were satisfied.

And when the leftover fragments were picked up,  
they filled twelve wicker baskets.