

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

(Corporis et Sanguinis Christi)



## ***“Why do we celebrate this Solemnity when we have Holy Thursday?”***

Corpus Christi (Body and Blood of Christ) is a Eucharistic solemnity, or better, the solemn commemoration of the institution of that sacrament. It is, moreover, the Church's official act of homage and gratitude to Christ, who by instituting the Holy Eucharist gave to the Church her greatest treasure. Holy Thursday, assuredly, marks the anniversary of the institution, but the commemoration of the Lord's passion that very night suppresses the rejoicing proper to the occasion. Today's observance, therefore, accents the joyous aspect of Holy Thursday.

## ***“How important is our belief in the Eucharist?”***

The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life."<sup>136</sup> "The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch."<sup>137</sup>

"The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being. It is the culmination both of God's action sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship men offer to Christ and through him to the Father in the Holy Spirit."<sup>138</sup>

Finally, by the Eucharistic celebration we already unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy and anticipate eternal life, when God will be all in all.<sup>139</sup>

In brief, the Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith: "Our way of thinking is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking."<sup>140</sup>

**“Come on, it’s really Jesus?” “Isn’t it just a sacred symbol?”**

From Jesus himself. Gospel of John Chapter 6:

*I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; <sup>50</sup> this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”*

*<sup>52</sup> The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us [his] flesh to eat?” <sup>53</sup> Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever eats\* my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever.” <sup>59</sup> These things he said while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.*

*<sup>60</sup> Then many of his disciples who were listening said, “This saying is hard; who can accept it?” <sup>61</sup>*



Jesus first repeated what he said, then summarized: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.’ The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’

His listeners were stupefied because now they understood Jesus *literally*—and correctly. He again repeated his words, but with even greater emphasis, and introduced the statement about drinking his blood. (John 6:53–56).

Notice that Jesus made no attempt to soften what he said, no attempt to correct “misunderstandings,” for there were none. Our Lord’s listeners understood him perfectly well. They no longer thought he was speaking metaphorically.

The Greek word used for “eats” (*trogon*) is very blunt and has the sense of “chewing” or “gnawing.” This is not the language of metaphor.

***“Did the early Christians even believe that after Christ left them?”***

**St. Ignatius, whose writings are amongst the earliest we have after the New Testament epistles, circa A.D. 80 wrote,**

“Consider how contrary to the mind of God are the heterodox in regard to the grace of God which has come to us. They have no regard for charity, none for the widow, the orphan, the oppressed, none for the man in prison, the hungry or the thirsty. They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not admit that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, the flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in His graciousness, raised from the dead.”

**St. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest Christian apologists, writing around A.D. 148 wrote,**

“...but as Jesus Christ our Savior being incarnate by God’s Word took flesh and blood for our salvation, so also we have been taught that the food consecrated by the Word of prayer which comes from him, from which our flesh and blood are nourished by transformation, is the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus.”

**And, St. Irenaeus, around A.D. 180 wrote,**

“[Christ] has declared the cup, a part of creation, to be his own Blood, from which he causes our blood to flow; and the bread, a part of creation, he has established as his own Body, from which he gives increase to our bodies.”

**“How can I celebrate this Feast Day in our home?”**

The best way to celebrate this feast in the home is with Jesus in the Eucharist.

1. Go to Mass. If you can’t make Mass here are several websites that will have the Mass for this feast.
  - a. <https://thesundaymass.org/>
  - b. <https://www.heartofthenation.org/online-mass/sunday-mass>
  - c. [https://www.youtube.com/user/syrdio?disable\\_polymer=true](https://www.youtube.com/user/syrdio?disable_polymer=true)
2. Read and pray scripture. In Particular John Chapter 6 or today’s readings: Genesis 14:18-20, Paul’s 1<sup>st</sup> letter to the Corinthians 11:23-26, and Luke’s Gospel 9:11-17

***“How do I read and pray scripture?”***

# HOW DO YOU PRAY THE LECTIO DIVINA?

Lectio Divina is a practice of **scriptural reading**. It involves meditating on a passage of the Bible, preferably the **Gospel of the day**.

## Steps to pray:



### 1. INVOKE

Invite the Holy Spirit to guide the reading of the Scripture.



### 4. PRAY

Begin to dialogue with the Lord and open yourself to his will.



### 2. READ

Ask yourself: What is this passage saying? If you can, use a Bible commentary.



### 5. CONTEMPLATE

Listen closely with your heart and put into practice what he has told you.



### 3. MEDITATE

In a moment of silence, try to listen to the voice of God.



How to pray? 10 ways of praying



3. Go to Adoration of the Eucharist. If you can't find a place, here is one online 24/7. Just spend 15 minutes today in his presence.
  - a. "Adore Cast" on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4A6RIOwC2E>
  - b. Read one of Thomas Aquinas's beautiful hymns to the Eucharist. (See last page of packet)
  - c. Listen to **Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina** sacred music while adoring or by itself.
  - d. "Palestrina Motet for 5 voices" on Youtube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxJFMBv4lbo>
  
4. When you eat your dinner with your family tonight, make sure Jesus Christ is present in some way.

"Out of the darkness of my life, so much frustrated, I put before you the one great thing to love on earth: the Blessed Sacrament ... There you will find romance, glory, honour, fidelity, and the true way of all your loves upon earth."

— J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*

"He remains among us until the end of the world. He dwells on so many altars, though so often offended and profaned."

- St. Maximilian Kolbe

"Do you realize that Jesus is there in the tabernacle expressly for you - for you alone? He burns with the desire to come into your heart...don't listen to the demon, laugh at him, and go without fear to receive the Jesus of peace and love..."

- St. Therese of Lisieux

## Pange lingua gloriosi corporis mysterium

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Sing, my tongue, the Saviour's glory,  
Of His Flesh, the mystery sing;  
Of the Blood, all price exceeding,  
Shed by our Immortal King,  
Destined, for the world's redemption,  
From a noble Womb to spring.

Of a pure and spotless Virgin  
Born for us on earth below,  
He, as Man, with man conversing,  
Stayed, the seeds of truth to sow;  
Then He closed in solemn order  
Wondrously His Life of woe.

On the night of that Last Supper,  
Seated with His chosen band,  
He, the Paschal Victim eating,  
First fulfils the Law's command;  
Then as Food to all his brethren  
Gives Himself with His own Hand.

Word-made-Flesh, the bread of nature  
By His Word to Flesh He turns;  
Wine into His Blood He changes:  
What though sense no change discerns.  
Only be the heart in earnest,  
Faith her lesson quickly learns.

Down in adoration falling,  
Lo, the sacred Host we hail,  
Lo, o'er ancient forms departing  
Newer rites of grace prevail:  
Faith for all defects supplying,  
When the feeble senses fail.

To the Everlasting Father  
And the Son who comes on high  
With the Holy Ghost proceeding  
Forth from each eternally,  
Be salvation, honor, blessing,  
Might and endless majesty.  
Amen. Alleluia.

## How do I teach my kids about the Body and Blood of Jesus?

There are many mysteries in our church and at times it can be the hardest things to explain to our children, whether it's our own kids, godson or daughter, or children of our parish community. Below you will find some activities to engage our younger parishioners and help teach them.

1. Inviting Jesus to the dinner table.
  - a. Say grace
  - b. Light a candle
  - c. Thank Him for our many blessings
2. Make His presence known throughout your home.
  - a. Have Crucifix on the walls of your home
  - b. Pictures or Statues throughout your home
3. Create a space to talk to Him
  - a. Have a designated prayer space or "table"
  - b. Utilize our formal prayers but also teach the children to just have conversations with Jesus.
4. Have the children participate during Mass
  - a. Quietly explain what the Priest is doing during the Consecration
  - b. Have them participate in Children's Liturgy of the Word  
Children go and hear the same readings that are being read at Mass but at their level. It is also a more child centered environment where the children participate.
5. End your day with nighttime prayers giving thanks.
6. If your child is too young to receive the Eucharist, begin explaining why it's so important to feed our souls.
7. When your child is old enough make it a priority to get them to Mass every weekend for their nourishment.

Think about it- we have everyday routines that we are so accustomed to doing that we do them without thinking. How can we make Jesus a part of our routines? Do we have to mention Him or "overdo" it to have our children see and understand how important a relationship is with Him? Absolutely not. But, how easy is it to take 2 minutes before dinner and say Grace? Or 2 minutes before bed and give thanks for the day? Take a minute while driving the kids to soccer and share with them what you are grateful for or share with them a struggle you are having that you are asking for His guidance. He doesn't ask a lot of us, make the time.



## The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many." - Mk 14:22-24