

## Body and Blood of Christ - Yr. C

[Reading I: Genesis 14:18-20](#)

[Responsorial Psalm: 110:1, 2, 3, 4](#)

[Reading II: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26](#)

[Gospel: Luke 9:11b-17](#)

Readings may be found on the US Bishop's website:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/061922.cfm>



Loaves and Fishes

On Holy Thursday, the church commemorated Christ's gift of himself at the Last Supper. It was one of several important themes of those holy days. As the church enters back into the ordinary action of God in our lives, our attention is drawn to the central role that the Eucharist plays in our lives week by week. In gathering for the Eucharistic liturgy each Sunday, we reconnect with the source of our life and our mission in life, to be the Body of Christ in this time and this place. In Cycle C, nourishment is given a central focus for reflection with bread being the symbol.

Bread was the main source of daily sustenance. It provided half or more of the daily caloric intake at the time of Jesus. Wheat was the grain of those with some money. Barley and sorghum were the grains of the poor. Grain along with oil and wine comprised most of the diet. Fish was available only along the Mediterranean coast and near the Sea of Galilee.

The people were tired, hungry, and in a desolate place. The Apostles raised the situation to Jesus and Jesus challenges them to do something. The Apostles recognize their inadequacy and say that there are only two fish and 5 loaves but Jesus tells them to share what they have. The people eat and are satisfied.

The Gospel passage presents the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. For the Jewish people, the images of Moses and the manna, and the miraculous multiplication of the loaves by Elisha, presents Jesus in the line of the great figures of the Israelite faith tradition.

The language describing the event reflects Eucharistic liturgical phrases. "Taking, ... Blest, Broke, ... Gave, ..., Ate."

In the sharing, people are nourished and sustained. With the inclusion of the Eucharistic phrases, one's attention is drawn to how Jesus satisfied whatever one's hunger is today. Jesus can sustain us through the Eucharist and provide all that a disciple needs.

Additionally, as one hears Jesus command to "Give them some food yourselves", each person is called to respond to the needs that exist around them. There is no magic formula to make God act. God has sent each person to bring God's response to the world that hungers in many different ways.

The Genesis reading presents the mysterious figure of Melchizedek. He is mentioned twice in the Hebrew Scriptures, this passage in psalm 110. He is also mentioned in the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews. The name Melchizedek means king of righteousness and he is also the King of Salem (Peace) later known as Jerusalem. He is presented as a king and a priest. This double role has made him a precursor to Jesus, the eternal King and High Priest. Melchizedek is presented as a priest of blessing, one who communicates the blessings of God and helps people recognize their blessing and from whom these blessings came.

The passage from First Corinthians is the oldest description that we have of the Last Supper, written around the year 50. (The earliest Gospel was in the late 60s.) The early formation of this text is reflected in the insertion of the supper between the distribution of the bread and the

sharing of the cup. Paul states that he received this from the Lord. He did not invent it but is handing on to his readers, what he himself had received. His intent is to make sure that they know what they should be doing when they gather for prayer and that it was not something that he or someone else originated. There are two perspectives to keep in mind.

First, in celebrating the Eucharist, we are remembering what Jesus did. This is not just a thinking about what happened but we entering into and participating in Christ offering of himself. Christ's redemptive act is made present in the here and now so that we who participate are part of Christ's gift of himself to the Father. The second aspect looks to the future. Participation in the Eucharist will sustain people until Christ comes again. There is an eschatological (end of the world) aspect to the Eucharist. In celebrating it, there is a looking forward to the eternal banquet that God will provide for all God's people.

### **Reflection Questions:**

How does sharing food and drink sustain you?

What gifts do you have that can feed the hungers of others?

Who or what helps you recognize the blessings that you have and from whom they come?

How do you connect the Eucharist with the dying and rising of Jesus? With the eternal banquet of God's reign?

### **Themes**

The Body and Blood of Jesus

Proclaiming the Death and Resurrection of Christ

Sent to nourish others

Participation in the Heavenly Banquet

### **Prayer Suggestions:**

For the Church: that we will live as a Eucharistic people, giving and sharing ourselves, as Christ continually does for us, so that all may have life

For this assembly: that we may find strength in each Eucharist that we share so that we may profess in word and deed the dying and rising of Lord each day

For all who cannot receive the Eucharist: that we, as Body of Christ, may be a source of God's love and compassion for them

For greater awareness and reverence for Christ's presence: that we may recognize the many ways Christ is present in the Eucharist, in the scriptures, and in one another, and approach our celebrations with faith and reverence