

This Week's Sunday Readings: The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Year A

First Reading: Deuteronomy 8:2-3. 14-16

Moses said to the people: 'Remember how the Lord your God led you for forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, to test you and know your inmost heart – whether you would keep his commandments or not.

He humbled you, he made you feel hunger, he fed you with manna which neither you nor your fathers had known, to make you understand that man does not live on bread alone but that man lives on everything that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

'Do not then forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery: who guided you through this vast and dreadful wilderness, a land of fiery serpents, scorpions, thirst; who in this waterless place brought you water from the hardest rock; who in this wilderness fed you with manna that your fathers had not known.'

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 147:12-15. 19-20. R. v.12

(R.) Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

1. O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!
Zion, praise your God!
He has strengthened the bars of your gates,
he has blessed the children within you. (R.)
2. He has established peace on your borders,
he feeds you with finest wheat.
He sends out his word to the earth
and swiftly runs his command. (R.)
3. He makes his word known to Jacob,
to Israel his laws and decrees.
He has not dealt thus with other nations;
he has not taught them his decrees. (R.)

Second Reading: 1 Cor 10:16-17

The blessing-cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ, and the bread that we break is a communion with the body of Christ. The fact that there is only one loaf means that, though there are many of us, we form a single body because we all have a share in this one loaf.

Sequence

Sing forth, O Zion, sweetly sing
The praises of thy Shepherd-King,
In hymns and canticles divine;
Dare all thou canst, thou hast no song
Worthy his praises to prolong,
So far surpassing powers like thine.

Today no theme of common praise
Forms the sweet burden of thy lays –
The living, life-dispensing food –
That food which at the sacred board
Unto the brethren twelve our Lord
His parting legacy bestowed.

Then be the anthem clear and strong,
Thy fullest note, thy sweetest song,
The very music of the breast:
For now shines forth the day sublime
That brings remembrance of the time
When Jesus first his table blessed.

Within our new King's banquet-hall
They meet to keep the festival
That closed the ancient paschal rite:
The old is by the new replaced;
The substance hath the shadow chased;
And rising day dispels the night.

Christ willed what he himself had done
Should be renewed while time should run,
In memory of his parting hour:

Thus, tutored in his school divine,
We consecrate the bread and wine;
And lo – a Host of saving power.

This faith to Christian men is given –
Bread is made flesh by words from heaven:
Into his blood the wine is turned:
What though it baffles nature's powers
Of sense and sight? This faith of ours
Proves more than nature e'er discerned.

Concealed beneath the two-fold sign,
Meet symbols of the gifts divine,
There lie the mysteries adored:
The living body is our food;
Our drink the ever-precious blood;
In each, one undivided Lord.

Not he that eateth it divides
The sacred food, which whole abides
Unbroken still, nor knows decay;
Be one, or be a thousand fed,
They eat alike that living bread
Which, still received, ne'er wastes away.

The good, the guilty share therein,
With sure increase of grace or sin,
The ghostly life, or ghostly death:
Death to the guilty; to the good
Immortal life. See how one food
Man's joy or woe accomplisheth.

We break the Sacrament; but bold
And firm thy faith shall keep its hold;
Deem not the whole doth more enfold
Than in the fractured part resides:
Deem not that Christ doth broken lie;
'Tis but the sign that meets the eye;
The hidden deep reality
In all its fullness still abides.

Behold the bread of angels, sent
For pilgrims in their banishment,
The bread for God's true children meant,
That may not unto dogs be given:
Of in the olden types foreshadowed;
In Isaac on the altar bowed,
And in the ancient paschal food,
And in the manna sent from heaven.

Come then, good shepherd, bread divine,
Still show to us thy mercy sign;
Oh, feed us still, still keep us thine;
So may we see thy glories shine
In fields of immortality;

O thou, the wisest, mightiest, best,
Our present food, our future rest,
Come, make us each thy chosen guest,
Co-heirs of thine, and comrades blest
With saints whose dwelling is with thee.

Gospel Acclamation: John 6:51-52

Alleluia, alleluia!
I am the living bread from heaven, says the Lord;
whoever eats this bread will live for ever. Alleluia!

Gospel: John 3:16-18

Jesus said to Nicodemus,
'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life.
For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son.'

Scripture readings from the English Translation of the Lectionary for Mass, © 1969. 1982, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. (ICEL); The Grail Translation of the Psalms © 1962.

HOMILY by Fr Michael Tate © LiturgyHelp

I don't know whether you recall some controversy a little while ago about mothers breastfeeding in public. I once saw a young mother discreetly breastfeeding her baby during Mass, and thought ...

'What a wonderful thing!' There could not be a better illustration, a better acting out of what Jesus says in today's Gospel: 'The one who eats me will live.'

For that is what the mother is offering as a gift to her infant: 'Come, I offer my body to nourish you, to give you life. Eat of me.' Of course, even mothers who find they cannot breastfeed offer the same gift for nine months as the baby draws its life from the mother's body in the womb.

This is a good analogy for what Our Lord was teaching in today's Gospel.

Jesus offers his body to nourish us in a way which shares his life with us: he gives us His Body to eat.

I also thought of an article written by a young mother.

'The whole messy anarchy of newborns is inextricably linked to their miraculousness. These tiny missives from eternity come swaddled in equal parts love and grace and sick. Caring for a newborn I am astonished we ever let ourselves be tricked into a false reverence for transcendence: here at the foundation of all our lives is a deeply immanent experience of the sacred. Where then is the boundary between the holy and profane?'

The boundary between the holy and the profane. This is also a question with Holy Communion: bread and wine, body and blood of Christ.

Not a molecule of the bread or wine changes. The 'bread of life' remains bread in appearance, the 'spiritual drink' remains wine in appearance.

But the underlying reality changes. What is really present is the risen Lord Jesus Christ whose glorified body is able to be present wherever the sacrament is celebrated. As St Pope John Paul II so wonderfully said: 'We digest, as it were, the secret of the Resurrection.'

And so the promise of today's Gospel can be fulfilled: 'Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them.' Notice once again the very maternal language. The risen Lord truly abides in us, we truly abide in the risen Lord. This is as intimate as the baby dwelling in the womb of its mother.

Perhaps mothers are best placed to understand this.

The Saviour of the World, the Lord of the Universe, dwells in my body and I dwell in His glorified body. What a union. What a communion. What a Holy communion!

And moreover, it is a Holy communion which is both a present reality and a foretaste and promise about our place in God's future: 'The one who eats this bread will live forever.'

So, after Holy Communion, we can say and pray with St Thomas Aquinas a true Eucharistic prayer of thanksgiving:

'Oh Sacred Banquet
in which Christ is received
and a pledge of future glory
is given to us.'

Gospel Reflection by Darcy O'Loughlin

(Youth Ministry Officer at St Paul's College)

The Gospel for today is John 6: 51-58.

It is the day after Jesus had fed over five thousand people by multiplying five loaves of bread and two fish. The crowd has returned and gathered around him, looking for more. Jesus tells them no such food can last. The true bread he now offers is his own flesh and blood. His words challenge the people to consider hunger beyond the physical needs of food and water.

During the Eucharist, we eat the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This is a concept that is hard to comprehend. How can we be eating the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ? Well during the celebration of the Eucharist, the bread and wine become the Body of Christ through the Holy Spirit and instrumentality of the Priest.

As Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever, and the bread that I give is my flesh for the life of the world...For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink" (John 6: 51-55).

The Risen Christ is truly present in the Eucharist; body, blood, soul and divinity. Though I try to explain it, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is an inexhaustible mystery that can never be fully explained in words. When we eat the bread, we remember Jesus and the sacrifice of his life for us. He died for our sins! He looked at us and said that we are worthy to be saved! So when I take the Eucharist, and eat the body and blood of Jesus Christ, I take a moment to remember his sacrifice for us, and the promise of eternal life.



THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST - YEAR A

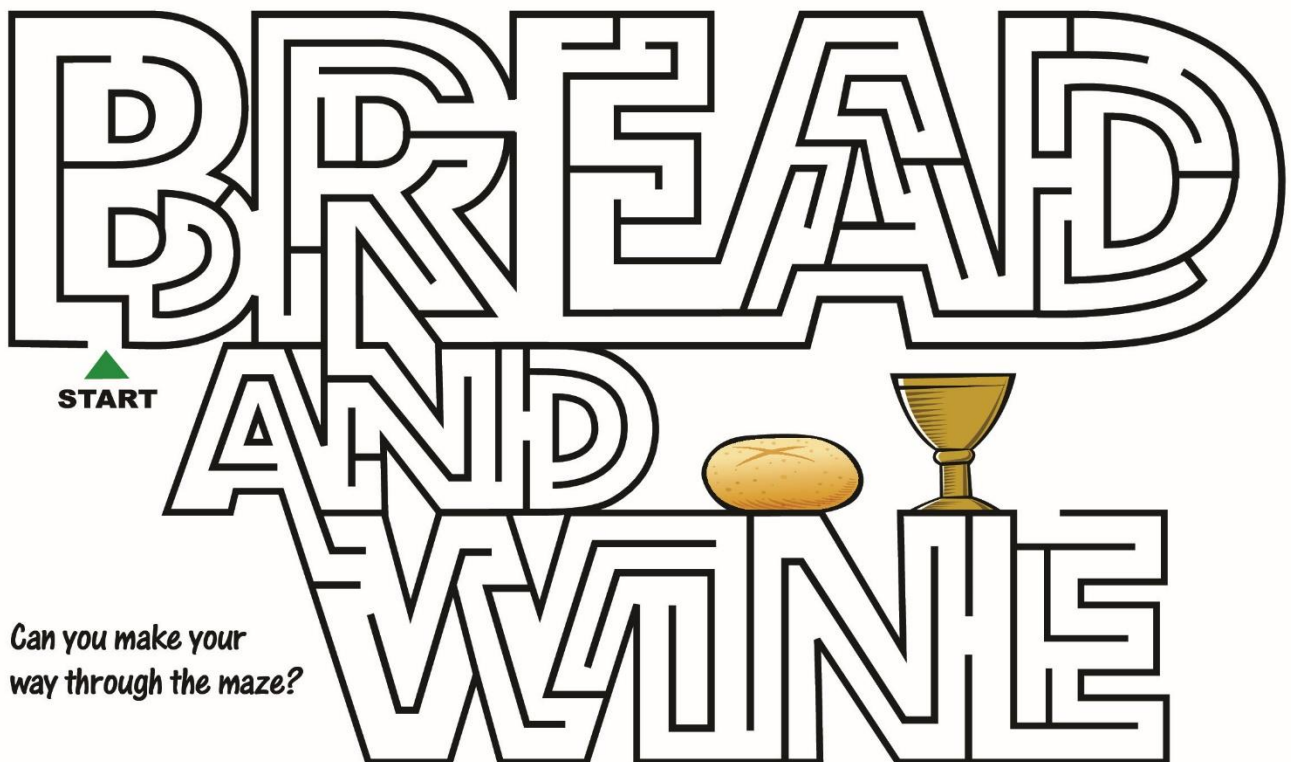
Whoever eats this bread will live forever

Jn 6:51-58

My name is

During Mass we share in a sacred meal called the Eucharist, which means 'to give thanks'. Draw yourself receiving bread from Jesus.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever.



Can you make your way through the maze?

SENIOR WORDSEARCH

Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever

Jn 6:51-58

A U U G Q Z V U O A P N U M K C D
I E K G P S X Q G Q L E X Z C A V
V V Q T L K A X G Z K V A M E B S
H S R N N L X Q U D E A Y R H F C
E U R T H S E L F L Y E B E N O Z
X L U G V V X X A U Z H Q P A F E
V S R R S B V S I Z U C A C V Q D
I X A E T E R N A L G S P E N Z E
D Q R X Q V O K G S S Y F R F U T
P G G S R B N P B W K L E E L P F
S W U E N O J S A R M R V P E K G
U P I D J E X I B D M I P Q U N K
I M N O W B G A O P L N O S L I W
Q U G W S C V O U Y B L U C T R G
I K X T A E L G H R G E X D T D B
K F O E S B U Y W V P G M R I Z N
B N Y T J F A Y H Y E F J P H P A

Try to find these words:

- arguing
- blood
- bread
- drink
- eat
- eternal
- flesh
- heaven
- live
- one
- son
- true

JUNIOR WORDSEARCH

Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever

Jn 6:51-58

W H K Z X M L B S O N I C W W
R O R Z N Z P J D Y K D U O P
I A V M J N N K Z U B T R U E
C O S S F L A L A G L H G M P
N O F X L E X Z R P O M S E F
Y L S U E E A T G H O L I V E
J J O Z S J X U U E D C N T M
D M N P H C X H I A N E S S W
D A E B I O K D N V B X E X G
D H J Q B R Q U G E O Z K I T
R J E T E R N A L N B W Q K E
I X F B L A Q P B Z E B D P M
N Q U W I B R E A D B T P W I
K L O D U I F J S C F B V M K
I I Z R M V N H I H F R E Z Z

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**Pope Francis'
Prayer for Liberation from the Epidemic
to Our Lady of Divine Love
Shrine of Our Lady of Divine Love
11 March 2020**

O Mary,
You shine continuously on our journey
as a sign of salvation and hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
who, at the Cross,
united with Jesus' pain,
keeping your faith firm.

You, Salvation of the Roman people,
know what we need,
and we trust that you will provide for those needs so that,
as at Cana of Galilee,
joy and celebration may return
after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform ourselves to the will of the Father
and to do what Jesus tells us.
He who took our suffering upon Himself,
and burdened Himself with our sorrows
to bring us, through the Cross,
to the joy of Resurrection. Amen.

*We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.
Do not despise our pleas — we who are put to the test —
and deliver us from every danger. O glorious and blessed Virgin.*

VIEW MASS ONLINE

There are several options to tune into Mass at home, here are a few:

- ❖ Diocese of Lismore Youtube Channel: 8am Sunday Mass from Lismore
- ❖ Macleay Valley Catholic Parish: 9.30am Sunday Mass livestreamed and available for viewing anytime from www.facebook.com/macleayvalleycatholicparish
- ❖ St Francis Xavier, Lavender Bay Mass on Demand comes to you every day from the Jesuit church of St Francis Xavier via the CathNews YouTube channel, view via this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeiO1-PBHwU>
- ❖ Daily Mass Archdiocese of Melbourne: <https://melbournecatholic.org.au/Mass>
- ❖ The 1.00pm Mass is streamed live daily (Mon - Fri) from St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne and is then available as a recording on demand until one hour prior to the next 1.00pm Mass. On Sundays, the 11.00am Mass is streamed and it is also available as a recording on demand.
- ❖ Daily Mass Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn: <https://www.catholicvoice.org.au/mass/>

FREEVIEW TV:

Tune in to channel 10 on Sunday mornings at 6:00am for 'Mass for You at Home'.

SOME OPTIONS FOR DAILY PRAYER

We encourage you to read the Sunday readings, perhaps with your family and friends. Take some time to reflect on them and share your reflections with each other. If you don't have access to a missal you can find the readings online here: <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/daily-mass-readings/>

The Diocese of Lismore has a Youtube channel. This includes hours of video reflections from Bishop Greg on a range of topics. Sunday Mass is also livestreamed Sundays at 8am.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference now have a dedicated portal of resources specifically for those homebound during the pandemic. These are listed in four categories: Masses Online; Sunday Readings and Liturgical Resources; Holy Week Resources; Prayers and Scripture. <https://www.catholic.org.au/prayathome>

The Vatican's Dicastery for Communication has published a free little book to help us to know how to discern and experience God's closeness and tenderness in the pain, suffering, solitude and fear of the pandemic. It is titled, "Strong in the Face of Tribulation; The Church in Communion: A Sure Support in Time of Trial". The book will be updated regularly and is available at <https://www.vaticannews.va/content/dam/lev/forti-nella-tribolazione/pdf/eng/strong-in-tribulation.-20042020.pdf>.

LiturgyHelp is a wonderful resource, which many dioceses, parishes and other church agencies subscribe to. It is currently offering free access to a range of prayer resources for personal and family prayer, with resources for all age groups. In particular, they hope that Catholics in social isolation around the world can gain a sense of prayerful solidarity with their local faith community and the whole Body of Christ. Head to their web page and sign up for free. <https://liturgyhelp.com/aus/pray>

Bishop Robert Barron's Word On Fire has many prayers, videos, reflections and other resources, including Daily Mass.

The Irish Jesuits have a wonderful website of reflections and prayers based on the Daily Mass Readings: <https://livingspace.sacredspace.ie/>

The Catholic Online website has a whole range of prayers, <https://www.catholic.org/prayers/>

These include the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, The Chaplet of Divine Mercy, Information about the Saints of the Day.

Living Word – Daily Gospel reflections. Subscription available at <https://cgcatholic.org.au/LivingWord/> or view daily at www.catholicvoice.org.au.

MAKE A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

An ancient practice of the Church for those who cannot be present at Mass is to make a spiritual communion. We have a simple prayer you can pray with longing in your heart to be united to Jesus:

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite
myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.