



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 - Corpus Christi - The Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord

**1** Relax & Remember

Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present.** Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



**2** Read

**Taken from the Gospel for 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 (Luke 9:11-17): Jesus Gives Food to the Crowds**

Jesus made the crowds welcome and talked to them about the kingdom of God; and he cured those who were in need of healing. It was late afternoon when the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the people away, and they can go to the villages and farms round about to find lodging and food; for we are in a lonely place here." He replied, "Give them something to eat yourselves." But they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we are to go ourselves and buy food for all these people." For there were about five thousand men. But he said to his disciples, "Get them to sit down in parties of about fifty." They did so and made them all sit down. Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven, and said the blessing over them; then he broke them and handed them to his disciples to distribute among the crowd. They all ate as much as they wanted, and when the scraps remaining were collected they filled twelve baskets.



**3** Reflect

**After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.**

*On the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ should we not have the gospel reading about the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper? No, the Church puts before us this reading of the wonderful gift of food from Jesus. It is a sort of open-air picnic Eucharist. It begins with Jesus talking to the crowd about the Kingdom of God; this is what happens in the earlier part of our Eucharist, as we listen to the Word in the readings and to the homily which interprets the Word for us. Then the Lord heals those who are in need of healing, and that means all of us, for we are always in need of healing in various ways. Only then does Jesus raise his eyes to heaven, bless the bread and distribute it, just as he gives himself to us in the Eucharist. A sign of the generosity and plenty of Jesus' gifts in the Eucharist is represented by the twelve baskets of left-overs, ready for consumption by the twelve tribes of the new Israel. In the same way, on the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ we share joyfully in the sustenance which Jesus gives to us and to the huge numbers of his followers across the world.*

**How can I participate more fully in Jesus' gift of the Eucharist? Perhaps I could make better preparation before Mass begins; take time for reflection afterwards; give fuller attention during the Mass.**

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

**4** Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. **Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.**



# WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019



## First Reading: *The Blessing of Melchizedek*

### Genesis 14:18-20

Melchizedek king of Salem brought bread and wine; he was a priest of God Most High. He pronounced this blessing: "Blessed be Abraham by God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, and blessed be God Most High for handing over your enemies to you." And Abraham gave him a tithe of everything.

*Melchizedek is a historically mysterious figure; designated a king of Salem, he suddenly appears from nowhere to greet Abraham and bless him. In gratitude Abraham gives Melchizedek a tenth of the spoil he has just won in battle. The only other mention of Melchizedek in the Old Testament is in Psalm 110, where he is the priest-king of Jerusalem. The early verses of this Psalm are frequently cited in the New Testament as a fore-shadowing of the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of the Father at the resurrection: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool". In the New Testament the whole Psalm is understood to point to Christ, and so in the Letter to the Hebrews the verse, "You are a priest according to the line of Melchizedek" is interpreted as a reference to Christ's priesthood. Christ is a priest not in the line of Aaron, but in the line of Melchizedek. The Letter further argues that, since Melchizedek blesses Abraham, Melchizedek's priesthood is superior to that of Abraham and Aaron. So, by this slightly involved explanation, we are celebrating in this first reading the priesthood of Christ, a priesthood superior to that of the Old Law.*

*What does it mean when we say that all Christians share in the priesthood of Christ?*

## Second Reading: *The Lord's Supper*

### 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

This is what I received from the Lord, and in turn passed on to you: that on the same night that he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread, and thanked God for it and broke it, and he said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me." In the same way he took the cup after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me." Until the Lord comes, therefore, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming his death.

“The Eucharist is a celebration of the Body of Christ, in which we are all united in love.”

*From several points of view this is one of the most significant passages of the New Testament. To begin with, the terms 'received' and 'passed on' are technical terms in the rabbinic process of oral transmission of tradition; they show that what Paul is about to say is part of the tradition conserved in the Christian community. Secondly, it shows us that the repetition of this rite of the Eucharist was seen to bring, to those who took part, a participation in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus – whether they were worthy or unworthy. Moreover, Paul's purpose is to rebuke the Corinthians for taking part in the Eucharistic supper without due seriousness. Thirdly, it underlines some of the most precious aspects of the Eucharistic meal: it is the sealing of the new covenant in the cup of Christ's blood, that covenant which brings to each individual the union with the Father wrought by Christ's death. Fourthly, Paul's chief rebuke to the Corinthians is that they are disunited and selfish at their Eucharist, treating it just like an ordinary dinner, neglecting one another's needs; but in this text he reminds us that the Eucharist is a celebration of the Body of Christ, in which we are all united in love, and in which we all depend on one another.*

*Do we always remember this when we come together to celebrate the Sunday Mass? How does the Eucharist nourish your own life and faith?*

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