

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

This is a celebration of the Word to aid your worship this Sunday alone or with your household. If possible, place a simple cross or crucifix prominently in the room and light one or more candles. You can also place an image of the Virgin Mary there. If there is more than one person present, choose someone to lead the prayer and one or two people to do the readings.

Whoever leads the prayer can say:

Saint John Paul II reminded us that in commemorating the solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, the Church “does not only celebrate the Eucharist but solemnly bears it in procession, publicly proclaiming that the sacrifice of Christ is for the salvation of the whole world”. We rejoice in this post-Easter expression of our Eucharistic affection in order to deepen our attachment to the unique and unending event that transforms our lives. As the Sequence for Corpus Christi begs: “Come then, good shepherd, bread divine, still show to us thy mercy sign; O, feed us still, still keep us thine; So may we see thy glories shine in fields of immortality.”

SIGN OF THE CROSS

After a moment of silence, let everyone begin by making the Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

HYMN

Choose an appropriate hymn.

We place ourselves before the Lord, beginning with an act of contrition, such as:

O my God,

I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee,
and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments,
but most of all because they offend Thee, my God,
who art all good and deserving of all my love.

I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more
and to avoid the near occasion of sin.

Amen.

The following are the readings of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

A reading from

the Book of Deuteronomy

8:2-3, 14b-16a

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.”
The word of the Lord.

R Thanks be to God.

—————• **PSALM 147** •—————

R (12) O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!

Or: Alleluia!

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*

He 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*

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*

A reading from the first

Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

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.

The word of the Lord.

R Thanks be to God.

—————• **SEQUENCE** •—————

The sequence *Laud, O Zion (Lauda Sion)*, or the shorter form beginning with the verse *Behold the bread of angels*, may be said or sung before the Alleluia.

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.

The shorter form of the sequence begins here.

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:
Oft 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.

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the living bread which has come down from heaven, says the Lord. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever. **Alleluia!**

**A reading from
the holy Gospel according to John**

6:51-58

JESUS SAID TO the Jews: "I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world."

Then the Jews started arguing with one another: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" They said. Jesus replied: "I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you. Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him. As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will draw life from me. This is the bread come down from heaven; not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Allow for a few minutes of silent reflection. The following passage could be read:

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Oh Jesus! my Lord, my God, and my all! I believe that you in your living manhood are as truly present in the Blessed Sacrament as when you did walk amidst men and converse with them. Relying on their word, which shall not pass away, I believe that you are here, ever living to make intercession for us. Here is your sacred Body, which hung upon the cross; here is your soul, which was sorrowful unto death and agonised in the Garden of Olives on account of my sins; here are those sacred wounds made by the nails and spear; here are those eyes which looked with pity and love on the penitent Peter; here are those ears which heard the cruel cry...*crucify him*, and which listened so compassionately to all the ills of men. I do have faith. *Help the little faith I have* (Mk 9:24).

Throughout the centuries sacred writers have vied with one another in describing the marvel of the Real Presence. It has been called the greatest work of God, the mirror of the divine perfections, the reflection of the wisdom, the immensity, and the eternity of God, a type of all the operations of God, the teacher of the unity of God. It has been described as the continuation and the parallel of the Incarnation and the sum of its wonders, as the mirror of the life of Christ, as the triumph of the Church and even as its very life, as the explanation of the phenomena of the Church, as the compendium of all miracles, as the example of every virtue, as the fountain of all grace, as the magnet of souls. Yet, strive as they may, no writers, no poets, no saints can say anything more outstanding than this truth—the Blessed Sacrament is God.

CANON FRANCIS J. RIPLEY

Canon Ripley († 1998) was an English priest, author, and apologist. This excerpt is from This is the Faith. © 2002, Thomas A. Nelson, TAN Books, Charlotte, NC (www.tanbooks.com). Used with permission.

INTERCESSIONS

In a group, the leader can begin with these words:

The source and summit of the Christian life is the most Holy Eucharist. Rejoicing in this incomparable gift of God, we praise the Father and pray:

For the Church, the body of Christ: that we will deepen our devotion to the Eucharistic sacrifice which gives life to the world. Lord, in your mercy,

R Hear our prayer.

That the redemptive power of Christ's Eucharistic sacrifice will affect the hearts and minds of all who govern, even if they are not aware of it. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

For those who live in want: particularly at this time, those who long to receive Jesus, the Bread of Life, manna in the desert, once more. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

That this time of lockdown, isolation and distress may inspire new priestly vocations in the hearts of men who desire to bring the healing power of Christ's unconditional love to others. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

For the grace of a deeper gratitude for what we normally receive in the most Holy Eucharist, and the desire to share that gift, when we are able once more to receive it. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

Personal intentions

Our Father....

In a group, the leader could offer some words of consolation at this moment, such as:

Lord Jesus, we offer ourselves to you, with all our worries and concerns. Make us the living stones of the Church in this difficult time, and when we are free once more to gather in our churches, may we be strengthened in faith, hope, and charity.

An Act of Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus,

I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.

I love you above all things

and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,

come spiritually into my soul

so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and for ever.

Amen.

May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and lead us to everlasting life. And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

To conclude the celebration, you can sing or recite the following or another suitable hymn. Turn and face an image of Mary, if you have one.

Salve, Regina, mater misericordiæ;

vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve,

Ad te clamamus, exsules filii Hevæ.

Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes

in hac lacrimarum valle.

Eia ergo, advocata nostra,

illos tuos misericordes oculos

ad nos converte.

Et Iesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,

nobis post hoc exsiliu ostende.

O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.



Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,

Hail our life, our sweetness, and our hope!

To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.

To thee do we send up our sighs,

mourning and weeping in this valley of tears!

Turn, then, most gracious Advocate,

thine eyes of mercy toward us,

and after this, our exile,

show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

(V) Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,

R That we may be made worthy

of the promises of Christ....)

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Eucharistic Thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
behold us prostrate in your divine presence.
We humble ourselves profoundly
and beg you to forgive our sins.

We adore you, Almighty Father,
and with hearts overflowing we thank you
that you have given us your divine Son Jesus to be our Redeemer,
and that he bequeathed himself to us in the most holy Eucharist
even to the end of the world,
revealing to us the wondrous love of his heart
in this mystery of faith and love.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be forever. Amen.

O Word of God, Jesus our Redeemer,
we adore you and with hearts overflowing we thank you
for having taken human flesh upon yourself
and having become both Priest and Victim in the sacrifice of the Cross,
for our redemption:
a sacrifice which, through the overflowing love of your Sacred Heart,
you renew upon our altars every moment.

O High Priest, divine Victim,
give us the grace to honor your holy sacrifice in the most sacred Eucharist
with the homage of Mary most holy and of all your holy Church,
triumphant, suffering and militant.

We offer ourselves wholly to you;
of your infinite goodness and mercy accept our offering,
unite it to your own and grant us your blessings.

Glory be to the Father.... Amen.

O Divine Spirit the Paraclete, we adore you
and with hearts overflowing we give you thanks
that you have, with such great love for us,
brought about the ineffable blessings of the Incarnation of the Word of God,
a blessing which is being continually extended and enlarged
in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

By this adorable mystery of love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,
grant to us and all poor sinners your holy grace.

Pour forth your holy gifts upon us and upon all redeemed souls,
and in an especial manner upon the visible head of the Church, the Pope,
upon all Cardinals, Bishops and Pastors of souls,
upon priests, deacons and all other ministers of your sanctuary,
upon those in the religious and consecrated life,
and all your people. Amen.

Glory be to the Father... Amen.