



14th June 2020

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Ask a priest who has ministered in Africa to describe Offertory Processions and he will talk about fruit and vegetables and even chickens being presented! Every Mass is an invitation to every single participant to make a personal offering: this might be our gift in the collection, but should also be an offering of our heart, our life. This offering will be joined to the offering of Jesus on the altar, which becomes the sacrifice of the cross, which we receive again in Holy Communion. This holy “exchange” is at the centre of our meeting with Jesus—he receives what we offer, to offer us himself. And by the Church’s prayer of thanksgiving, remembering the Last Supper of the Lord, we believe that we are nourished with His very Body and Blood, the one sacrifice of Calvary where Christ made the supreme offering of Himself to the Father. *Please use this sheet for discussions at parish meetings or thoughts at home.*

3. MEETING JESUS IN OUR OFFERING

Bishop John writes ...

A very real way that we meet Jesus during Sunday Mass is in the Liturgy of the Eucharist and in receiving the Eucharist itself where Jesus is truly present. In today’s feast, of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, the Church celebrates the miracle of the Mass. When Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the last supper, he gave us a memorial of his Passion and fulfilled his promise to “be with us until the end of time” (Matthew 28:20). Unfortunately, and frustratingly, during this pandemic we have not been able to receive Communion sacramentally but only through the prayer of Spiritual Communion. Jesus can and does dwell within us. As we pray at home, perhaps following streamed Masses from around the Diocese, we can experience special graces from the Lord at these challenging times. As the gifts of bread and wine are presented on the altar, we are invited to offer to God all our prayers, concerns and hopes, trusting that he will transform them just as he will transform the gifts of bread and wine into his very self. We are encouraged to join in praying the eucharistic prayer in our hearts as the priest offers the sacrifice of Jesus to the Father on behalf of the people. As we prepare to enter into this great mystery let us remember the words of Jesus in today’s Gospel, “I am the living bread which has come down from heaven, anyone who eats this bread will live forever” (John 6:51).

Spiritual Communion Prayer by St Alphonsus Liguori

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.



offering which the Lord Jesus gave his people to make with him. The Procession with the Gifts expresses also our eager willingness to enter into the “holy exchange” with God: “accept the offerings you have given us, that we in turn may receive the gift of yourself.” Even though only a small number of people actually bring up the gifts, every member of the congregation is invited to think of what they offer to God this day, and spiritually join their gifts to the bread and wine.

The **Eucharistic Prayer**, the centre and summit of the entire celebration, sums up what it means for the Church to celebrate the Eucharist. It is a memorial proclamation of praise and thanksgiving for God’s work of salvation, a proclamation in which the Body and Blood of Christ are made present by the power of the Holy Spirit and the people are joined to Christ in offering his Sacrifice to the Father. The Eucharistic Prayer is proclaimed by the priest celebrant in the name of Christ and on behalf of the whole assembly, which professes its faith and gives its assent through dialogue, acclamations, and the Amen.

The eating and drinking together of the Lord’s Body and Blood in a Paschal meal is the culmination of the Eucharist. The **Communion procession** expresses the humble patience of the poor moving forward to be fed, the alert expectancy of God’s people sharing the Paschal meal in readiness for their journey, the joyful confidence of God’s people on the march toward the promised land.

When Communion is completed, the whole assembly may observe a period of **total silence**. In the absence of all words, actions, music, or movement, a moment of deep corporate stillness and contemplation may be experienced. Such silence is important to the rhythm of the whole celebration and is welcome in a busy and restless world.

At the Last Supper, Christ instituted the Sacrifice and Paschal meal that makes the Sacrifice of the cross present in the Church. From the days of the Apostles the Church has celebrated that Sacrifice by carrying out what the Lord did and handed over to his disciples to do in his memory. Like him, the Church has taken bread and wine, given thanks to God over them, broken the bread, and shared the bread and cup of blessing as the Body and Blood of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 10:16). The Church’s Eucharist, in all its rich variety of forms and traditions, has always retained this basic shape: the taking of the elements of bread and wine in the preparation of the gifts, the act of thanksgiving in the Eucharistic Prayer, the Breaking of the Bread, the giving and sharing of the Body and Blood of Christ in Communion.

The **Procession with the Gifts** is a powerful expression of the assembly’s participation in the Eucharist and in the social mission of the Church. It is an expression of the humble and contrite heart, the dispossession of self that is a necessary prerequisite for making the true

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Use these questions to guide your personal reflection, or in parish groups

- ◆ Do I feel a sense of preparing to “offer myself” with Jesus as the gifts are brought up?
- ◆ Is the Eucharistic Prayer truly the high point of the celebration?
- ◆ How do I join in with the Eucharistic Prayer even though the priest says the words?
- ◆ Do I feel the action of the Holy Spirit, of Jesus, of the Church in this prayer?
- ◆ Is Holy Communion rushed or chaotic? Could it be more reverent?
- ◆ Has this time without the Eucharist increased a spiritual hunger to receive Jesus?

Practical Questions

- ◆ Do we sing all the parts of the Liturgy of the Eucharist that we should?
- ◆ Is there a sense of reverence during the Eucharistic prayer and in preparation for Communion?
- ◆ Is there silence after communion?
- ◆ Are announcements made for the benefit of those not receiving communion?