



Bringing Home the Word

Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (A)

June 14, 2020

A Deeper Hunger

By Fr. Mark Haydu

The Book of Deuteronomy is written to the Israelites now safely in the Promised Land. After the pains of the desert, they enjoy prosperity and blessing. In the desert they were given a food they had never known before. Manna was a new discovery and a gift for their survival. Now that they could enjoy fruit and meat, Moses commands them to remember when they totally depended on God. In their abundance, they run the risk of forgetting all God has done. They are asked to recall, to remember, to memorize.

Sunday Readings

Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a

He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your fathers.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

We, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

John 6:51-58

[Jesus said.] "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you."

Cultivating our memory and recalling the acts of God's fidelity and providence are important to nurturing our faith. If we don't, our mind will glorify the forbidden fruits, or, like the Hebrews remembering the onions of Egypt, we will desire the food of our slavery.

We also experience a deeper hunger, more persistent than the physical. We hunger for love, freedom, peace, and communion. Jesus satisfies the deepest desires of the human heart. He gives up everything to win us back, even his own Body and Blood. We find freedom in submitting ourselves to the one who lifts us up. Peace and communion come from sharing the cup of his love. Jesus truly satisfies our hunger and thirst.

When we look around, foods are available that claim to be more satisfying. Some, in the absolute, can be venom: wealth, power, pleasure. Other realities, even the most pure, are beautiful but only partially nourish us, leaving us unsatisfied. The only truly filling food is that which the Lord gives. +

Jesus satisfies the deepest desires of the human heart.

A Word from Pope Francis

Eucharistic worship also teaches us the right balance of values: not to put earthly realities in first place but heavenly goods; to hunger not only for material food, but also for "food that endures for eternal life" (John 6:27).

—Address to the Dioceses of Cesena and Bologna, April 21, 2018



- Where do I go to eat? Who or what nourishes me?
- Am I tempted, enslaved, or weakened by less-filling foods?

Seven Works of Art of God in Our Church

By Fr. Thomas Richstatter, OFM

One thing you can say about Catholics: we aren't afraid of things. In fact, it's the opposite. We know that creation is good and that created things can serve as a window through which we see something of God. For us, things are not an obstacle to grace but a means of grace. This is true in those celebrations we call sacraments.



Humans are body, mind, and spirit, and we Catholics come to God with our whole being—not with words alone. We do not simply say, “Jesus is my Savior.” We Catholics do more.

We go into the baptismal tomb where we die with Christ, then plunge into the waters of birth in him. We come up from the Church's womb with rebirth and new life to be oiled and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, and fed on the Body and Blood of Christ at the Eucharist. Catholicism is an incarnated religion. It uses the ordinary stuff of this world to touch the world beyond.

An artist is always somehow embodied in his or her work. We can look at a painting and say, “That is a Picasso.” We hear a piece of music and say, “That's clearly Beethoven.”

In a similar way, we can look at the sacraments and say, “That's God!” We see the artist revealed in the work of art. That's what the sacraments are—seven

great artworks revealing the Creator.

Portraits of God

Baptism reveals God as the womb and source of all life. When I see a newly baptized infant in his or her parents' arms, I get a glimpse of parental God embracing us—loving us, not because of what we have done, but because we

are God's children. *Confirmation* reveals our destiny; we are to live to make visible in outward signs the “personality” of our Creator God. We are to be signs of wisdom, judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and awe.

The *Eucharist*, which we commemorate today, says it all: We become present to the Lord who died that we might live—who feeds us with his Body and Blood so that we become one body filled with his Spirit.

Reconciliation reveals a God ever ready to forgive and embrace us. *Anointing* shows us a God who heals, longing for the end of sickness, pain, and disease and calling us—along with all creation—to wholeness. *Holy orders* provides a glimpse of a God who shepherds the flock, leading and sanctifying all into the kingdom.

And what a powerful sign we have in *marriage*! In the faithful, total, through-thick-and-thin, for-better-or-worse love the couple promises each other in the

rite of marriage, all who witness the sacrament can glimpse how God loves us: faithfully, totally, through thick and thin, for better or worse. At their wedding, the bride and groom receive many wonderful gifts. But the gifts they receive are not as wonderful as the gift the couple gives us. They give us a sacrament, a sign of who God is.

Seeing More

As Americans, we value efficiency and production. We like getting to the point and getting the job done. Sometimes this can blind us to the symbolic function of things and events.

Sacraments “produce” through symbols. Sacraments help us see more. They help us see God in a baby's smile or in the touch of a loved one; they help us to find God in the “I'm sorry” of someone who has hurt us. The sacraments, and all of creation, reveal the divine Creator artist. +



Lord, through your Body and Blood you offer me the gift of eternal life. Help me to make sacrifices and share what I have with the poor.

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 15–20

Monday, Weekday:

1 Kgs 21:1–16 / Mt 5:38–42

Tuesday, Weekday:

1 Kgs 21:17–29 / Mt 5:43–48

Wednesday, Weekday:

2 Kgs 2:1, 6–14 / Mt 6:1–6, 16–18

Thursday, Weekday:

Sir 48:1–14 / Mt 6:7–15

Friday, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus:

Dt 7:6–11 / 1 Jn 4:7–16 / Mt 11:25–30

Saturday, Immaculate Heart of the Blessed

Virgin Mary: 2 Chr 24:17–25 / Lk 2:41–51

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