

Body and Blood of Christ – B – 2021  
Exodus 24.3-8 // Hebrews 9.11-15 // Mark 14.12-16, 22-26

→ Story is told about 9 soldiers who received an overnight pass from their base to go out and enjoy the evening...however when morning came, not one of the 9 was present for roll call

→ about an hour after their absence was noted...the first soldier straggled back to camp...and was immediately taken to the company commander

“I’m sorry to be late sir,” the soldier said, “but I had a date last night, lost track of time, and missed the last bus. I wanted to make back on time so I took a taxi...about half way back to camp, the cab broke down, so I went to the nearest farm and bought a horse....”

→ as I was riding the horse, the animal suddenly fell to the ground and died....so I walked the last couple of miles on foot and here I am.”

→ although the commander was skeptical about the chain of weird excuses, he let the young man off with a mild lecture on the virtues of punctuality.

→ thereafter the seven other soldiers reported in...one by one, each with the same story

→ they had a date, lost track of time, missed the last bus, took a cab, cab broke down, bought a horse, horse fell dead...

→ finally, the ninth and last soldier arrived...now totally exasperated, the commanding officer growled... “what happened to you?”

→ the ninth man replied.... “well sir, I had a date, lost track of the time, missed the last bus, hired a taxi...wait a minute...wait a minute...” the officer cried out.... “are you going to tell me that the cab broke down?”

→ “no sir,” the soldier replied.... “the taxi was fine...the problem was we couldn’t get through because there were so many dead horses on the road.”

→now you may be wondering what that story has to do with our celebration today...the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ...and on the surface maybe nothing...but a closer look shows that the story is really about realizing **the important things** in life....becoming aware of what truly matters...of what is significant...of what our priorities should be

PAUSE

→today we celebrate the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ

→we just heard the familiar words:

*Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them and said, "Take it; this is my body" ....then he took a cup, gave thanks and gave it to them and they all drank from it....he said to them... "this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many."*

→in essence what we celebrate TODAY is the life we have been given...our life in Christ...that is overflowing with mystery and filled with footprints of the divine

→...the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ was established in the 13<sup>th</sup> century...but it celebrates something far more ancient and represents something far more miraculous

→it is about --the institution of the Eucharist...the mystery of Christ's real presence...the sacrifice of the Mass

→and we can certainly...and most certainly do....appreciate the history....the ancient hymns...and the processions and benedictions

→we study the theology and doctrine....and we sit attentively at mass and listen to the most learned homily explaining the origin of this feast and what it represents

→but unless we discover and realize...the gift of the Eucharist...the strength and courage...the life and enthusiasm...the meaning and purpose....we gain each week from receiving the Body and Blood of Christ...then we will continue to miss the true meaning of our faith and belief...

PAUSE

→one of the mounting challenges we are facing these days as a church...is the growing lack of commitment on the part of so many to their faith and to the church on a regular basis...and the pandemic sadly has contributed to this challenge even more....

→it is troubling that more and more people don't find God or faith as being essential to their lives and existence

→and excuses abound...I'm too busy...it's boring...I don't get anything out of this...it's not convenient...I can pray to God on my own when I want too....

→however in reality...what all those excuses and the many more not-mentioned really mean....is a lack of fully understanding the true meaning of the Eucharist---and what it means to receive the Body and Blood of Christ....

→of how receiving the Body and Blood of Christ gives our life purpose and meaning...significance and value

→with all of the problems and setbacks...frustrations and disappointments ...we have faced in recent months...one thing that has remained constant is how we have been truly blessed by God's presence in our lives

→we are so blessed.....to have the opportunity to come here each week and celebrate...to share in the Body and Blood of Christ ---- the mass

→and how truly fortunate we are....because in many parts of the world today there are people starving for the Eucharist....people who are so grateful for the opportunity to receive the Body and Blood of Christ...

→to bring Christ into our minds, our hearts...our souls...the very core of who we are as a person

PAUSE

→it truly is a blessing for us all....to gather here and set the table, to break and bless the bread and wine and to share our Lord and ourselves with one another.

---to realize that our Lord is with us

---[and] to realize that the Eucharist **really is a vital and important** part of our lives

→may we never forget how truly blessed we are !