

Prayer Service and Presentation On the Eucharist For the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ

This service may be held at any time though it is ideally held on or around the feast of Corpus Christi (two weeks after Pentecost). The service is envisioned as a time to deepen our understanding and appreciation of the centrality of Eucharist in Catholic life and worship. Consider inviting a local or national expert on Eucharist who will educate in a pastoral way about the challenges we face because of decreased access to the Mass and sacraments because of the priest shortage. Encourage attendees to take some responsible action to “make their views known on matters which concern the good of the Church.” (Canon 212-2) See Outline for Parish Education Program on the Future of Priestly Ministry, available from FutureChurch (www.futurechurch.org).

Opening song: *One Bread, One Body.* (C 1978 by John Foley, S.J.. Oregon Catholic Press.)

Opening prayer (as all remain standing):

Leader: Let us proclaim who we are, all members of the body of Christ:

Group 1: We are young and old, We are rich and poor.

Group 2: We are white, we are African-American. We are Asian, we are Hispanic, we are all cultures and races.

Group 1: We are women, we are men, we are gay, we are straight.

Group 2: We are married, we are single, we are divorced, we are remarried.

Group 1: We are lay ecclesial ministers, we are religious educators, we are music ministers.

Group 2: We are religious sisters, we are chaplains, we are deacons, we are priests.

All: We come together to be who we are and to live our call to be the bread and wine Jesus was for the world.

Reading I: Isaiah 58:5-9

Sung Response: *“I myself am the bread of life. You and I are the bread of life. taken and blessed, broken and shared by Christ that the world might live.”* (C 1987, Rory Cooney NALR, Oregon Catholic Press, in Today’s Music Missal)

Reading II “Theologian Nathan Mitchell writes that ‘in Christian tradition the human person is not simply someone who *has* a body, but is someone who *is* a body. That challenges us to think beyond a narrow understanding of the body as a collection of muscles, bones and organs where a soul resides’ . . . This view of the body affects how we understand the Eucharist -- indeed even how we understand Christ. Writes Mitchell, ‘the body of Christ offered in consecrated bread and wine is not *something*, but *someone*...The ultimate intent of celebrating Eucharist is not to produce the sacred species for purposes of reservation and adoration, but to create the united body of Christ which is the Church.’ The body of Christ is not only *on* the table, but *at* the table

and *around* the table.” (From *Eucharist, Understanding Christ’s Body* by Msgr. William H. Shannon, Catholic Update, 1998)

Sung Response *“I myself am the bread of life. You and I are the bread of life. taken and blessed, broken and shared by Christ that the world might live.”* (C 1987, Rory Cooney NALR, Oregon Catholic Press, in Today’s Music Missal)

Reading III (Church Teachings on the Eucharist)

“The word "liturgy" originally meant a "public work" or a "service in the name of/on behalf of the people." In Christian tradition it means the participation of the People of God in "the work of God." (John 17:4) Through the liturgy Christ, our redeemer and high priest, continues the work of our redemption in, with, and through his Church.” (From the Catechism of the Catholic Church)

"The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all her power flows." (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) It is therefore the privileged place for catechizing the People of God. "Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity, for it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of humanity" (John Paul II Catechesi Tradendae)

Sung Response *“I myself am the bread of life. You and I are the bread of life. taken and blessed, broken and shared by Christ that the world might live.”* (C 1987, Rory Cooney NALR, Oregon Catholic Press, in Today’s Music Missal)

“The celebration of the liturgy, therefore, should correspond to the genius and culture of the different peoples. (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*). In order that the mystery of Christ be "made known to all the nations . . . to bring about the obedience of faith," (Romans 17:26) it must be proclaimed, celebrated, and lived in all cultures in such a way that they themselves are not abolished by it, but redeemed and fulfilled: (John Paul II Catechesi Tradendae). It is with and through their own human culture, assumed and transfigured by Christ, that the multitude of God's children has access to [the Creator], in order to glorify the one Spirit.” (From the Catechism of the Catholic Church).

Sung Response *“I myself am the bread of life. You and I are the bread of life. Taken and blessed, broken and shared by Christ that the world might live.”* (C 1987, Rory Cooney NALR, Oregon Catholic Press, in Today’s Music Missal)

Alleluia acclamation may be sung here.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 15:29-37

Reader: The gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Presentation on the Eucharist *A formal presentation may be given by an outside expert. Alternatively, the formal presentation may be given before the celebration itself in which case a very brief reflection could be given here.*

Sung Response *“I myself am the bread of life. You and I are the bread of life. Taken and blessed, broken and shared by Christ that the world might live.”* (C 1987, Rory Cooney NALR, Oregon Catholic Press, in Today’s Music Missal)

Leader: As we have reflected upon how we are the body of Christ, let us support each other in prayer.

Prayers of the Faithful

Group 1 Jesus, you had compassion for the crowd who were so hungry for the bread of your word that they went three days without food.

Group 2 Help us to realize our hunger for the Bread of Life. May we too be willing to make sacrifices in behalf of the good news that brings life to the world.

Group 1 The disciples did not know where they could find enough bread to feed the people, so they brought what little they had to Jesus.

Group 2 Generous One, teach us to turn to you when we do not know where to find what we need.

Group 1 Jesus welcomed and accepted the peoples' gifts of seven loaves and a few fish.

Group 2 Welcoming One, help us to accept our gifts, give thanks and bless God for them.

Group 1 Jesus, you did not allow fear of scarcity to deter you from trusting God's ability to increase the loaves and fish into more than enough to feed the hungry crowd.

Group 2 Trusting One, help us trust that you can turn our poverty into abundant blessing for our own nourishment and that of all God's people.

Group 1 Jesus you healed great crowds of the lame, the blind and the mute so that they were made whole.

Group 2 Compassionate One, help us not be afraid of our woundedness as individuals and as a Church. Lead us along paths of healing, wholeness and right relationship.

Group 1 The people praised you God, when they saw the mighty works of Jesus.

Group 2 Holy One of Blessing we ask you to transform our experience of sacramental scarcity into an overflowing abundance of diverse vocations to priestly and church ministry.

Group 1 Because of Jesus, the lame began to walk, the silenced to speak, and those who had been blinded, to see.

Group 2 Liberating One, we trust your healing power even now at work in our wounded lives and in our wounded Church. We await the day when your healing mercy makes us leap for joy, shout of God's liberating love and see with newly opened eyes the wonders of God's merciful power to heal, even wounded structures which exclude.

Ritual of Sending Forth (*Quiet music, such as John Michael Talbot's: "Christ has No Body Now but Yours."* or other appropriate Eucharistic hymn plays in the background)

Participants are invited to come forward and receive a blessing from each other. The person being blessed places their hands (folded palms together as in prayer), inside those of the person doing the blessing who says: “(Name)_____ by your Baptism, you are the body of Christ. I thank God for you, I bless you, and I send you forth in the power of Jesus to be life for our world.”

Leader: We have gathered together today to praise God for our unity in the midst of our diversity, to give thanks for the witness of each other and most especially for the gift of Jesus Christ. We go forth to be the body and blood of Christ, to be the feast that we celebrate. Go in peace to love and serve our God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Closing song: *God Has Chosen Me* (Copyright 1990 Bernadette Farrell), or *Sing a New Church* (Text by Delores Dufner OSB C 1991) in Music 2001, Oregon Catholic Press.

*Corpus Christi celebrations are an outgrowth of the **Future of Priestly Ministry Project** developed by **FutureChurch** in partnership with **Call to Action** (www.cta-usa.org). This celebration was created by pastoral ministers, Sr. Christine Schenk csj and Ms. Lori Ashyk.*

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