



Bringing Home the Word

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)
June 18, 2017

The Life-Giving Power of Blood

Diane M. Houdek

From humanity's earliest days, people have been awed by the connection between blood and life. A serious injury to a blood vessel would have made it clear that when the blood drained from the body, life was extinguished. We know so much more about blood now. We have lost some of the sense of the mystery involved. But no matter how much our knowledge increases, blood still plays a central role in the life of the body.

For the ancient Jews, blood was considered the source of life and an essential part of temple sacrifices. Even today,

part of the Jewish community's kosher butchering process involves careful and ritual draining of an animal's blood.

But we don't often think of the blood of Christ as being as central to the Eucharist as the body of Christ. For centuries, today's feast was known as *Corpus Christi*, Latin for "body of Christ." However, today we refer to the feast as the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. And all three *Lectionary* readings emphasize the spiritual and religious symbolism of blood.

Still, until relatively recently, the Precious Blood was not routinely offered to the people at Communion. And even now that it is part of nearly every liturgy, many people forego the chalice. While our doctrines teach us that Christ is fully present in the bread and the wine, the intention from the Last Supper is clearly that Jesus has given his body and his blood for us and to us. We might think about it this way: Bread nourishes us, but a blood transfusion can save our life.

At times we take the gift of the Eucharist for granted, much as we take for granted the blood that continually flows through our veins, pumping life to every part of our bodies. Today's feast asks us to take time to reflect on and give thanks for the life-giving power of blood—Christ's and our own—and to share that gift with the community. †

Sunday Readings

Deuteronomy 8:2–3, 14b–16a

"[The LORD, your God,] brought forth water for you from the flinty rock and fed you in the wilderness with manna...."

1 Corinthians 10:16–17

"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"

John 6:51–58

"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day."

A Word From Pope Francis

Let us ask ourselves...in adoring Christ who is really present in the Eucharist: do I let myself be transformed by him? Do I let the Lord who gives himself to me guide me to going out ever more from my little enclosure in order to give, to share, to love him and others? Brothers and sisters, following, communion, sharing. Let us pray that participation in the Eucharist may always be an incentive: to follow the Lord every day, to be instruments of communion, and to share what we are with him and with our neighbor."

— Homily, the
Solemnity of
Corpus Christi,
May 30, 2013



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



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



A Father's Virtues

By Robert P. Lockwood

My Old Man would never think of wasting time on anything as unproductive as sleep on a Sunday morning. When I was a little guy, he would haul me out of bed for the 8 AM Mass. We would get there early, and he would plop me down in one of the back pews while he went to the vestibule to serve as an usher.

After Mass, I watched as he and another man bagged up the money from the collection. I asked him why two guys did it, and he said, "Just in case somebody wants to try something." This made me think that, in addition to everything else, the Old Man was a cop for the Church.

One Sunday when I was about seven, I was in my usual spot as the collection began. I reached into my pocket and realized that I had lost the kids' collection envelope. I had a quarter in my pocket that the Old Man had let me keep from his change for coffee. I had no choice. I put the quarter in the basket, saying goodbye to a comic book I had planned to buy with it.

As we were heading home after Mass, I told the Old Man what happened. He said, "You did a good thing," then

reached into his pocket and handed me a quarter. I truly believed then, and believed for years, that the Old Man had spotted my quarter among the hundreds of quarters in the collection, plucked it out and substituted another. It seemed natural that he could perform a little miracle like that. After all, this was my Old Man.

Teaching by Doing

"The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, [namely] 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:9-10).

What St. Paul is talking about here is virtue, the habit of performing actions for good. Virtue defines how we are meant to live our lives. Virtue is what we admire in others and hope to see in ourselves.

It was only after I became a father myself that I realized that 99 percent of what my father did, 99 percent of what he tried to teach me, was the virtues lived. The Old Man was never much about the

theory behind the practice, the thesis behind the moral choices. He was all about living the faith on the street corner. He was about what you did and what you didn't do and the difference it made in the neighborhood that day. Classically defined, the virtues we acquire through the repetition of good acts are prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. Every day, the Old Man was working on those with me. †

Source: *Everyday Catholic*,
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- What important life lessons have you learned through the example of your father or a father figure?
- Why are fathers so important? How do their failures and successes affect their children?



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

Dad was all about living the faith on the street corner.

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 19-24

Mon. Weekday:
2 Cor 6:1-10 / Mt 5:38-42

Tue. Weekday:
2 Cor 8:1-9 / Mt 5:43-48

Wed. St. Aloysius Gonzaga:
2 Cor 9:6-11 / Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

Thu. Weekday:
2 Cor 11:1-11 / Mt 6:7-15

Fri. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus:
Dt 7:6-11 / 1 Jn 4:7-16 / Mt 11:25-30

Sat. Nativity of St. John the Baptist:
Is 49:1-6 / Acts 13:22-26
Lk 1:57-66, 80