

OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, MUMBLES
Reflection for
The Body and Blood of Christ, Year A, 14 June 2020
(May be used for Home Prayer Service)
Dominican Friars, Swansea

This reflection may be used during the home prayer service. Please see the home prayer service sheet for details.

THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST FEEDS US TO ETERNAL LIFE

The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. Accordingly, today's celebration forms a seamless liturgical whole with the liturgies of Easter, Pentecost and Most Holy Trinity. The Eucharist was given to the Church by Christ during the Sacred Triduum of Easter. As the Church was born of the paschal mystery, the Eucharist then stands at the centre of the Church's liturgical life (John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 3).

The Eucharist is also connected with Pentecost in the sense that it is the Holy Spirit of God who effects the change of the Eucharistic elements into the Body and Blood of Christ. Today's celebration is also linked with our belief in the Most Holy Trinity on the fact that when we partake of the Eucharist, we share in the divine life of the Blessed Trinity.

The Body and Blood of Christ: Body (flesh) and Blood is the usual OT expression for the human life (cf. Neh 5:5; Micah 6:7). In the Gospel, Jesus uses this same expression to communicate to us that in the Eucharist, he gives us his divine life for our salvation. Thus, in the Eucharist, we share in the divine life of Jesus who humbled himself to share in our human life.

We regularly consume earthly meals to nourish us with biological nutrients and sustain natural life in us. Similarly, we need a spiritual and heavenly food to give us spiritual strength and eternal life. This spiritual and heavenly food is none other than the Eucharist. The manna which the ancestors of the Israelites ate in the desert did not satisfy their inner longing for God. It is the Eucharist which we have received from Christ that assures us of the eternal presence of God in our lives.

The Real Presence: In the Holy Eucharist, the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially present (CCC 1374). The teaching of the Real Presence finds roots in the words of Christ himself who said, 'my Body is REAL food and my Blood is REAL drink' (Jn 6:55). Also, while Christ was handing over this sacrament to his disciples, he said, 'This is my BODY; this is my

BLOOD' (cf. Mt 26:26-28). These were a clear expression that Christ was giving his REAL and TRUE self to his disciples as sacramental meal. Thus, in our participation in and reception of this sacrament, we adore Christ as our Lord and God just as Thomas did (cf. Jn 20:28).

Our reverence for this sacrament also extends to the liturgy of the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in which we adore Jesus in his divine majesty. In this liturgy, we pray that we may always experience in our lives the fruits of Christ's work of redemption.

Necessitated by the current lockdown, many Catholics have been participating at Masses only remotely. When such people in faith adore Jesus from their homes during Mass or adoration, they are spiritually united with Christ and His Church. No doubt, such people receive the fullness of the grace of the Eucharist as if they were physically present through the Spiritual Communion.

The Eucharist is Our Food for the Journey: As recounted in the First Reading, the Israelites encountered the God of hosts in the wilderness. In that wilderness, they experienced hunger and thirst, and they had to wade through many rocky paths. In our journey of faith and daily living, we also feel like a parched land without water. We feel as if our strength is failing us because of the challenging times we have been through and are still going through. Our paths in life have been flooded with insurmountable rocks. The assuring message of today for us is that the Eucharist sustains us in the wilderness of life when life seems dry, rocky, and lonely as in a wilderness.

When we participate in the Eucharist in faith, we encounter the living Christ in person who renews our lives. When we eat ordinary bread, our body digests and assimilates it but when we eat the Living Bread, Christ transforms us, and he lives in us (cf. Jn 6:56). May our participation in the sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord bring eternal life to us who in faith receive and adore Christ the Lord. Amen.