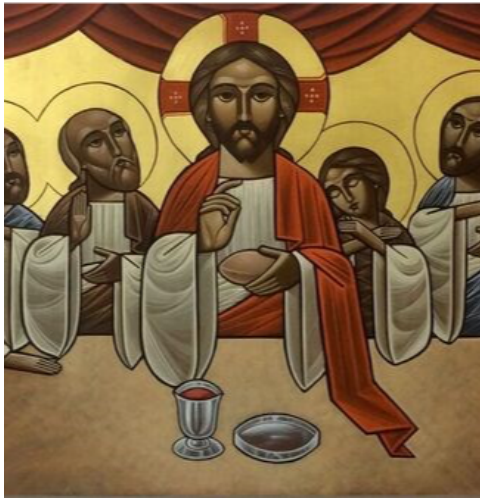


The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) Year A, 11th June 2023



Icon in Neo-Coptic style
Isaac Fanous Yossef (1919–2007), Last Supper (detail)

The bread we break is a communion with the body of Christ'

Today's feast is an opportunity to reflect on the wonderful mystery of the Eucharist: the sacrament that nourishes our faith and gives life to the world. Each reading offers an opportunity to pray about the significance of this gift, reminding us of the richness of the Eucharistic tradition in the Church.

Moses recalls that though the people of God were hungry and thirsty in the wilderness, God never abandoned them (**First Reading Deut. 8: 2–3,14-16**). Instead, he encouraged them to have faith in his continuing living presence.

The **Psalm** (147 (148)) suggests many reasons to praise God, including both the material and spiritual nourishment that God offers us.

Paul reminds the factious Corinthians of the profound spiritual significance of taking the body and blood of Christ. By participating in the Eucharist, they are uniting themselves to Christ and to the whole Christian community. **Second Reading** (1 Cor. 10: 16–17)

In the **Gospel**, (John 6: 51–58) Jesus affirms that he is the bread of life: the very life force of God. Through his life, death and resurrection, Christ nourishes our deepest hunger for God. We draw life from him even as Jesus drew life from the Father.

This week, we ask that we may truly become one as followers of Christ.

(From Prego – Outreach of St. Bueno's to the Diocese of Wrexham)

Reflection: Nicholas Crowe OP

The resurrection of Jesus obliged the first Christians to make a 'developmental leap' in their understanding of his identity and mission. This 'leap' involved the internalisation of two mind-bending and world-transfiguring truths: first, that Jesus was truly risen; second, that he was bodily present to his disciples in a new way. The testimony of the Scriptures is clear: the same person that died on a cross and was buried in a tomb rose again on the third day. After the Resurrection, Jesus' friends ate with him, drank with him, they even put their fingers into his wounds: the same body that died rose again. In Him is a life more powerful than death.

Yet the same eyewitness testimony is also clear that our Lord was different after his Resurrection. He rose to a new life; he did not go back to his old way of relating to his disciples.

Our Lord's Ascension into heaven and the outpouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost drove a further leap in the disciples' thinking. They had seen our Lord ascend into heaven, yet this did not represent our Lord's departure. Instead, after the Ascension Jesus was present to his friends in a still more mysterious and intimate way. Instead, the disciples recognized Jesus' presence in their midst whenever two or three were gathered in His name. They saw Him in the least of their brothers and sisters. Most importantly, they knew Him in the breaking of bread. Our Lord Jesus is still with us after the Ascension, indeed, there he is *more* present to us now than during the days of his earthly ministry because now he is really and truly present in our midst whenever we celebrate Mass. We heard St. Paul declare in our second reading:

The blessing-cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ, and the bread that we break is a communion with the body of Christ.

Here Paul is handing on a fundamental insight from the primitive Church: the same Jesus whom the disciples had known and loved during his earthly ministry, whom the disciples had eaten and drank with after his Resurrection, was now truly and really present under the sacramental sign of the Eucharist. What appears as bread and wine is in fact the Body and Blood of Christ. Christ is still really and truly present to his people. Whilst his Body is no longer ordinarily detectable by natural vision, it is nevertheless still discernible and recognisable by faith.

It is the real presence of Christ among his people under the sacramental sign that we celebrate on this great feast of Corpus Christi.



