

Corpus Christi Sunday [a]

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
May 25, 2008

Readings

Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a
1 Corinthians 10:16-17
John 6:51-58

Calendar:

May 25: Africa Day
May 26: Memorial Day in the US [to remember those killed in the various wars of the nation]

Quotes

Many problems darken the horizon of our time. We need but think of the urgent need to work for peace, to base relationships between peoples on solid premises of justice and solidarity, and to defend human life from conception to its natural end. And what should we say of the thousand inconsistencies of a "globalized" world where the weakest, the most powerless and the poorest appear to have so little hope! It is in this world that Christian hope must shine forth!

John Paul II, Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 20

Catholic social teaching is built on a commitment to the poor. This commitment arises from our experiences of Christ in the Eucharist.

US Bishops, Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions

The whole Church as such, is directly called to the service of charity: "In the very early days the Church added the agape to the Eucharistic Supper, and thus showed herself to be wholly united around Christ by the bond of charity. charity gives life and sustains the works of solidarity that look to the total needs of the human being."

John Paul II, Christifideles Laici

Among the mature members of the Community of Nations, however, a strong awareness is needed that considers food as a universal right of all human beings, without distinction or discrimination.

Benedict XVI, Message for World Food Day 2007

History speaks of a great yearning for peace, but also of the recurring disappointments humanity has had to suffer amid tears and blood. ... But in recent years, how many times have we had to witness the outbreak of violent warfare in one part of the world or another. The believer, however, does not give up. He knows he can always count on God's help. In this regard, Jesus' words at the Last Supper sound particularly eloquent: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (Jn 14:27). ... In giving himself, Christ gave us peace. His peace is not that of the world, often made of shrewdness and compromises, and of oppression and violence. Christ's peace is the fruit of his Passover, that is, the fruit of his sacrifice which uproots hatred and violence and reconciles human beings with God and with one another; it is the trophy of his victory over sin and death, of his peaceful war against the evil of the world, a war fought and won with the weapons of truth and love.

John Paul II, Corpus Christi 1999

Thoughts for your consideration

Each scripture today refers to a meal that is shared and to the effects of that meal.

- The manna reminded the people of the Exodus that they were not on a journey alone. They needed God. They needed the community. They were on a journey of liberation that was bigger than their personal selves.
- The Eucharist was to remind the Corinthians that they shared one bread and thus were one people. The meal called them to unity and solidarity. The meal called them to move beyond their divisions.
- In the gospel, the dialogue with Jesus reminds all of us that we are nourished for the “life of the world.” The Eucharist sends us forth for a mission of liberation and life in the world. Our Eucharist celebrates and challenges our sharing and our relationship with each other.

We can ask questions on the level of our sacramental celebration:

Does our celebration of the Eucharist reflect the excitement and joy of being one in community?

Does our celebration reflect a spirit of deep “solidarity?”

Are we celebrating our solidarity as the living Mystical Body of Christ?

Do we recognize Christ in the breaking of the bread?

Is everyone welcome? Is there diversity in our community?

Does the Eucharist empower us for action – for life?

We can ask questions on the level of our life as a community:

How are we in solidarity with the poor in our city and in the world?

Do we offer direct service to those in need?

Does our solidarity move from the works of charity toward the works of justice?

Do we work for that “social change” that will heal the structures and systems that keep us apart – that prevent us from being one body?

How are we the living Body of Christ in the world?

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The Eucharist is about sharing food and sharing in God’s life. As we reflect on the Eucharist today in 2008, we must reflect on the recent dramatic increases in food prices, especially in the developing world. There have been riots about food in the poorest parts of the world. Even in the developed world, some people have been struggling to buy food for their families. People have questioned whether it is right to use agricultural resources for the production of fuel, when everyone cannot afford enough to eat. Jesus talks about being bread that is “the life of the world.” How does the living bread of Jesus help us deal with the food issues of 2008?

Questions for Reflection in your Faith Sharing Group

What has been the most significant meal that you have shared with a group of people?

What made it significant? How did it affect your behavior?

Actions - Links

On Corpus Christ Sunday, we may feel called to reflect on the issue of hunger in the world. Bread for the World is a nationwide Christian citizens movement seeking justice for the world's hungry people by lobbying our nation's decision makers. Their web site is at: <http://www.bread.org>. Their site has basic facts on hunger in the USA and internationally. Go to: <http://www.bread.org/learn/hunger-basics>

Memorial Day may be a good time to reflect on Catholic Social Teaching concerning war, especially in light of the ongoing war in Iraq. One may find lots of resources at Pax Christi USA. Go to <http://www.paxchristiusa.org>

“Crazy Facts”

Bread for the World reports that:

- More than 854 million people in the world go hungry.
- In developing countries nearly 16 million children die every year from preventable and treatable causes. Sixty percent of these deaths are from hunger and malnutrition.
- In the United States, 11.7 million children live in households where people have to skip meals or eat less to make ends meet. That means one in ten households in the U.S. are living with hunger or are at risk of hunger.

Prayers of Intercession

Response: Lord, teach us how to share what we have.

For those who are struggling because of higher food prices all over the world, we pray....

For the millions in our nation who experience some shortage of food, we pray....

For the millions around the world who experience hunger today, we pray....

For farmers who can no longer effectively farm because of the injustices brought about by globalization and various trade policies, we pray....

For all workers who are without a living wage, we pray....

For women who are denied equal opportunity to share in the fruits of their work, we pray....

For children who don't have what they need to grow up as healthy adults, we pray....

Prayer

A Native African Prayer for Peace

Almighty God,
the Great Thumb we cannot evade to tie any knot;
the Roaring Thunder that splits mighty trees:
the all-seeing Lord up on high who sees even the footprints of an antelope
on a rock mass here on Earth.
You are the one who does not hesitate to respond to our call.
You are the cornerstone of peace.