

Lectionary Faith-Sharing Community
SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST
Cycle B - June 6, 2021



OPENING PRAYER

Guide: *Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.*

All: **Let the house of Israel say, "His mercy endures forever"**

Leader: Let those who fear the Lord say, "His mercy endures forever."

All: **Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.**

Guide: *We invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit:*

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send, Lord your spirit and renew the face of the earth. Oh God, that you have instructed the hearts of your faithful with the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us through the same spirit that always enjoy her divine consolation. By Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING [Exodus 24 (3-8)]

When Moses came to the people and related all the words and ordinances of the Lord, they all answered with one voice, "We will do everything that the Lord has told us." Moses then wrote down all the words of the Lord and, rising early the next day, he erected at the foot of the mountain an altar and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.

Then, having sent certain young men of the Israelites to offer holocausts and sacrifice young bulls as peace offerings to the Lord, Moses took half of the blood and put it in large bowls; the other half he splashed on the altar.

Taking the book of the covenant, he read it aloud to the people, who answered, "All that the Lord has said, we will heed and do." Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words of his."

Within the profound experience that the people make of the manifestation of God at Sinai, the celebration of the covenant occupies a privileged place. Thus, all the people participate in this mystery that really affects the future of all. Yahweh, through Moses, proposes the covenant: he will be the God of Israel, that is, their deliverer, their defender. And the people will be the *People of Yahweh*.

Immediately a memorial is written - the book of the words of Yahweh - and a testimony is erected: twelve stones, which will remember the twelve tribes that witnessed the commitment of all the people with Yahweh. Afterwards, the covenant is sealed with blood as was the custom in ancient times. That is why victims are sacrificed: some are offered as a holocaust, that is, they are completely burned; others immolate themselves as peaceful victims or victims of communion, giving rise to the ritual banquet, which signified the communion of the people with God.

The covenant is a relationship of life that compromises each moment and the entire existence of individuals and the people. Or, as the prophets will later say, the covenant is a relationship of love. Life and love always new, always renewed. Hence, they demand a continuous conversion, open to permanent renewal. In this way, the blood of the victims shed on the altar and over the people takes on all the meaning of the vital seal of the contracted alliance, or covenant.

To participate in the same blood is to establish a family bond or to enter into a communion of life. In the celebration of the covenant, the blood of the victims is the bond between God - the altar represents Yahweh - and the people, who, from now on, will be the great allies. Through that alliance, or covenant, they will share life and love.

This text is parallel to those that narrate the institution of the Eucharist. In this way we contemplate the old covenant and the new one. However, the first is but an image of the second, the new and definitive covenant of God with all humanity. In the Eucharist we discover in a single person the characteristics of

mediator, priest, victim and altar, which make the action of Jesus, offering himself as an oblation to the Father, the definitive and universal alliance of all humanity with God forever.

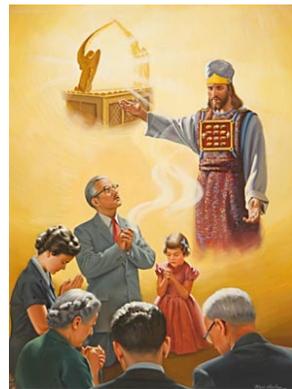
SECOND READING [Hebrews 9 (11-15)]

Brothers and sisters:

When Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be, passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation, he entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.

For this reason he is mediator of a new covenant: since a death has taken place for deliverance from transgressions under the first covenant, those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.



The Jewish liturgy of the Day of Atonement expressed in a grand way the consciousness of guilt of men and the desire to discharge it and achieve reconciliation with God. The High Priest pierced the veil of the temple, entered the "most holy enclosure" by himself and offered the blood of animals as a sacrifice to atone for his faults and those of the people. Afterwards, he would go out to have to restart another year at the same pace. The man's guilt remained despite the sacrifice. Year after year the ritual was repeated, but sins were not forgiven.

Jesus has entered the sanctuary of heaven once and for all, to come into the presence of God. And he has done it with the sacrifice of his passion, that is, by virtue of his own blood. The effectiveness of this act remains forever. The hope of men to achieve forgiveness of their sins and to achieve communion with God is definitively fulfilled in the mystery of the death and glorification of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And the liberation achieved thanks to the blood of Christ does not end, it does not end. No additional sacrifices will be necessary.

This excerpt from the letter to the Hebrew Christians focuses our attention on the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice over Old Testament sacrifices. While these were something external to the person offering and did not get to transform it, the sacrifice of Christ is something personal: he offers himself.

GOSPEL [Mark 14 (12-16), (22-26)]

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"'" Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there."

The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.



The author specifies the time in Greek chronological code. For the Greeks the day went from sunrise to sunrise. This explains that the first day of the unleavened bread and slaughter of the lambs can take place on the same date. The slaughter began at 2:30 p.m. and Easter at 6 p.m. On the other hand, in Jewish chronological code the coincidence on the same date is impossible, since 2:30 p.m. belonged to the end of one day and 6:00 p.m. marked the beginning of the next.

Already at dinner, the author focuses on two gestures of Jesus; the bread broken and distributed; the wine distributed. In both cases the narration by the author is followed by the interpretation of the gesture by Jesus. The interpretation of the gesture of the cup is followed by other words of Jesus about his personal destiny, of a glorious future.

A Jewish event is translated into a non-Jewish chronological key. This undoubtedly has a meaning. In Mark's intention, the event that he is about to refer is not exclusive to one time, but rather enters into all times and will always repeat itself. It is repeated today, in June 2021. The event that is repeated today has to do with a Jesus who is going to die, more precisely, who is going to be killed. But Mark tells us that Jesus is a conscious victim, Jesus knows what is going to happen to him and why it is going to happen to him. The event is repeated in our Eucharist. Jesus is represented by the bread and wine of which the diners participate.

According to Mark's understanding, Jesus' Last Supper was a Passover meal. And since the Passover supper could only be eaten in the holy city, it was necessary for all the pilgrims to find a space (a room), in which the lamb sacrificed in the temple would be consumed; consumption that regularly had to be made by a community of at least ten participants. For such communities to be possible, the inhabitants of Jerusalem had to make their living rooms freely available and offer them to visiting pilgrims from other regions. We know from many testimonies that the inhabitants of Jerusalem gladly did this for the pilgrims. Thus, it is explained that the two disciples sent ahead could prepare dinner as indicated.

At dinner, first, everything runs normally, as was customary. Jesus, as president ("father of the family or of the house"), pronounces the blessing on the bread, to which the disciples had to answer "Amen!", as a sign that such blessing was shared by all. Later, Jesus breaks the bread and the surprising thing happens. While the normal thing, both in one Passover dinner as in another, was that the "father of the house" did not say anything when delivering the blessed and broken bread, Jesus says: "Take, this is my body." And as the disciples already knew, from their scriptures, that, speaking of the "body", one was referring to the whole man, they understood perfectly that Jesus, their Lord, wanted to give himself to them in that bread. After this surprise, dinner returned to its normal course.

The Master sees, describes his imminent and cruel end. But this end is not an end. The story goes on, his personal story goes on. The Master sees and describes the triumph of the Kingdom of God. There he will be, toasting with new wine. The Supper, then, opens up to hope, to life, to apotheosis. For this reason, at the end of the Supper the author gives it features of a triumphant exit.

Reflection

- (1) What does the Sacrament of the Eucharist consist of? Mass or Holy Communion?
- (2) Who is the only Minister of the Eucharist at a Mass? Why?
- (3) The Presence of Christ in the Host, Is it Real or Symbolic?
- (4) The Presence of Christ in the Priest, Is it Real or Symbolic? ("Persona Christi")
- (5) The Presence of Christ in the assembly of the faithful, is it real or symbolic?
- (6) The Presence of Christ when the Scriptures are proclaimed. Is it Real or Symbolic?
- (7) The Presence of Christ in suffering people (naked, hungry, sick, imprisoned) Is it Real or symbolic?
- (8) Is the Eucharist to be adored or to be lived? Why? How?
- (9) What are the fruits that we receive when we receive Communion?
 - + Increase our union with Christ
 - + Purifies us from our venial sins
 - + Grants us the grace necessary to avoid sin and live our vocation to holiness
 - + Strengthens us in fraternal charity
 - + Unites us as a Church (That is why it is called Communion)

- + Strengthens us in charity towards those in need and those who suffer
- + Helps us to live trusting in the Lord. Inner peace...
- +
- + (keep adding ...)

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: *Lord of the day and night, of the beginning and of the end: At the closing of this meeting, once again we lift up our hearts to You, divine source of all life.*

All: **Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus, hear me. Within Thy wounds hide me. Separated from Thee let me never be. From the malignant enemy, defend me. At the hour of death, call me. And close to Thee bid me. That with Thy saints I may be Praising Thee, forever and ever. Amen.**

Leader: *Lord hear our prayers* (attendees can propose their own needs of prayer)

All: **In the same way in which we have being blessed by your presence as we meet, we ask now to bless our safe return to our homes. May your holy blessing be over us + in the name of the Father ...**

Leader: *May the King of the eternal glory gather us together in His heavenly banquet. Amen.*

