

2021 June 06

Body and Blood of Christ

Readings:

First: Exodus 24.3-8, "See the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you." (8)

The Psalm: 116, "I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call in the name of the Lord." (17)

Second: Hebrews 9.11-15, "He entered once for all into the Holy Place ... with his own blood." (12)

The Gospel: Mark 14.12-16, 22-26, "This is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." (24)

We are of one Blood

Eating and drinking are regular acts of all living creatures, small or big. Humans are no exception. We do eat and drink daily a few times. We don't need a reminder. The body arranges for it automatically. We humans eat varieties of food and normally are not bothered as to what functions different food and drink perform. They give nutrition, energy, stamina, immunity, and the like. They enable the body also to do the works of healing, repair, and maintenance. What we eat and drink sustains our body, mind, and the spirit.

Does the food we eat have anything to do with our spirit? The answer is that if we do not eat and drink for a few days, the spirit will take off from our body, leaving it a dead body. The spirit takes off because it can no longer live in a dead body. Once it takes off from the body it lives by itself. It will be in a world not necessarily familiar to us now, though we aspire all through our life to be there. While it is in the body the food we eat and the drinks sustain the spirit in the body. It needs also other food for nourishment. The skills, knowledge, and experience we gain are the feeding stock of the spirit for its life in the body.

The spirit needs further feeding for keeping the quality and purpose of life here on earth and then to continue living in the other world when it is freed from the body. Jesus in his great wisdom and benevolence gives himself as the food for our spirit. He gives his body and blood for our sustenance by transforming the substance of the bread we eat and the wine we drink. It is not exactly blood transfusion and injection of food. This is an act only God can do or make happen. We must understand that we through participation in the Body and Blood of Christ we are participating in the Resurrection of Christ. All sacraments are participation in the death and Resurrection of Christ. Holy Eucharist is the most significant in this regard. We will not succeed in trying to fully understand this, which we are taught to be considered as a mystery and to believe. Only faith can explain this and the spirit that dwells in our body is that which keeps our faith alive and enables us to believe.

This day we solemnly celebrate this mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ. A person without faith in what Jesus did and said cannot and will not grasp this mystery. But those with faith, without going for much speculation and research, just bow their heads and kneel in adoration, and then receive the transformed, or better trans-substantiated, bread and wine as the Body and Blood of the risen Christ. When we say the 'Amen' to the prompting of the Eucharistic minister, '**the Body of Christ**', we in effect say, yes Lord, I believe that you are coming into me now through this your Body and Blood.' This is an act of Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, incorporating us into his body, which is the Church. Thus, we are made into one body kept alive with the one and the same blood! On our part it is an act of faith in the words of Jesus. We believe because Jesus said so.

(The readings of the day are given at the beginning. The numbers in parentheses refer to the quotes from them. Good to go through the readings beforehand to properly understand the Reflections)

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