



Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

[Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time superseded]

† Sunday 18th June 2017

Cycle of Prayer – A deeper understanding between Christians

Keynote: One People of God – in Communion with Christ

Book of Deuteronomy 8: 2-3, 14-16

Moses reminds the people of Israel how the Lord God led them from the hardship of slavery in Egypt to the freedom they now enjoy – a journey not without its difficulty and dangers. Like our own journey of faith it all depends on God, and our fidelity to the promise. 'Remember,' says Moses, 'how the Lord your God led you... in the wilderness to humble you, to test you and know your inmost heart... God made you feel hunger, then fed you with manna... to make you understand that man does not live by bread alone... but on everything that comes from the mouth of God.' The gospel will further develop these thoughts of being tested by God and at the same time show us how God is with us on this journey.

Responsorial Psalm 147 [146] – a personal song of praise for God's loving care

First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 10: 16-17

The Christians at Corinth used to celebrate the Eucharist during a communal meal. Paul reminds them, 'The blessing-cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ, and the bread we break is a communion with the body of Christ.' For Paul, the sharing of this Eucharist makes those who share the one loaf, one in union with Christ, and also at one – in communion (koinonia) with each other. 'Though there are many of us,' he concludes, 'we form a single body because we all have a share in this one loaf.' Present day Christians may have a long way to go to achieve the fullness of this unity, and yet in baptism fundamentally we are one in Christ and may give thanks and rejoice!

[Optional Singing of Sequence Laud Sion]

Gospel according to John 6: 51-58

Jesus speaking to the people reminds them of their past history as the People of God. 'I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever... he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him... this is the bread come down from heaven; not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.' Of course, many at the time found these words unacceptable and confusing, they asked: 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' But Jesus did not change his message, 'I tell you most solemnly. If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you will not have life in you. Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day.' For the believer these are the words of life, for some they mark out a hard place in their journey of faith. We might recall the words from Deuteronomy: 'understand that man does not live by bread alone... but on everything that comes from the mouth of God'.

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Note: Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist – Saturday 24th June 2017.