



## The Most Holy Body & Blood Of Christ May 29, 2016 C

- ◆ **Catechism Lesson Three: Jesus, our Brother and Savior**
- ◆ **Update on Parish Census**
- ◆ **Reflections on the Eucharist**

This week's catechism lessons will focus on:

- ◆ Jesus' hidden life
- ◆ Did Jesus have siblings?
- ◆ Jesus – fully human, fully divine
- ◆ Was it God's will that Jesus die a horrible death on the Cross?
- ◆ What does "*he descended into hell*" mean?
- ◆ What was the difference between Lazarus's resurrection and Jesus' Resurrection?
- ◆ Are you saved? A Catholic response

Catechism Lesson Three, Wednesday, June 1, 7:00pm in the Parish Hall. If you have not previously attended, please let Teresa at the parish office know if you plan on coming.

### Parish Census Update

About 80 people attended my training session this past Monday. It was great to see so many people interested in participating in this pastoral outreach.

The session was fun at times like when we roll played a door-to-door visit, with me as the non-church-going Catholic. I griped about the church 'always asking for money!' and asked if that 'Irish guy was still the pastor!' To the latter question, I told the participants to answer: "No, he isn't. Fr. Sheedy left the parish 25 years ago!"

I am really hoping to have more and more parishioners experience this ministry. So please stay open to doing this.

We had one doctor come to the meeting to collect the baggage and listen to my remarks. She intends to share my special bulletin with non-church-going Catholics whom she meets. Thank you, Dr. Cathy Rossi.

### A report from two of our Ascension Missionaries

I am happy to share briefly a part of a report from two ladies who 'hit the streets' on Tuesday.

While they mostly met non-Catholics people, they did encounter one man who said his "wife used to be Catholic" and his wife's mother used to play Bingo at Ascension.

When the visitors saw chalk drawings on the

sidewalk, they asked if there were children in the house. Yes, there was a 4 year old. This information became a perfect opportunity to share the school flyer and 'talk up' the school. The man, an Episcopalian showed great interest in our FREE VPK4 program *and* the financial aid possibilities after VPK. Then our two missionaries took time to share the contents of the special bulletin with the man.

This one visit from 26 door knocks made our missionaries' street time very worthwhile.

If you did *not* sign-up to be a census worker or an Ascension missionary, please keep listening for God's call.

**Prayer Warriors.** Please be faithful to your commitment to praying daily for the success of this spiritual adventure. Once a month (usually the first Tuesday), we have a Holy Hour Service in church.

### Reflections on the Eucharist and its implications for our lives

In a piece titled *Yes! Amen!*, Patricia Sanchez writes:

*In his book entitled Who Speaks for God? (Delacorte Press, New York: 1996), Jim Wallis includes the following true story, "Ripped from the Headlines." As promoters are fond of saying, this short narrative poignantly illustrates the solidarity we are celebrating today, as members of the Body of Christ who are privileged to be nourished with the Body and Blood of Christ.*

*While covering the conflict in the middle of Sarajevo, a reporter saw a young girl get shot by a sniper. Shocked by what he had witnessed, the reporter stopped being a reporter for a few minutes. Throwing down his pad and pen, he rushed to the aid of a man who had picked up the child and hurriedly helped both of them into his car.*

*As the reporter floored the accelerator and raced to the hospital, the man cradled the bleeding child in his arms. "Hurry," he pleaded, "my child is still alive!" A moment later, he said, "Hurry, my friend, my child is still breathing" and, after a few more minutes, "Hurry, friend, my child is still warm." Finally, he moaned, "Hurry, O God, my child is getting cold."*

*When they finally arrived at the hospital, the little girl was dead. As the two men were in the lavatory, washing the child's blood from their hands, the man turned to the*

reporter and said, "This is a terrible task for me. Now, I must go and tell her father that his daughter is dead. He will be heartbroken."

Stunned, the reporter stared in silence at the grieving man. Then he said, "I thought she was your child." "No, but aren't they all our children?"

Today's feast of the Body and Blood of Christ encourages in us a similar line of thinking and prompts us to ask similar questions. Aren't all the members of Christ's Body our children, our brothers and sisters, with whom we share a bond that is deeper and more binding than blood?

Granted, there are two aspects to this feast. On the one hand, we are celebrating the sacramental Body and Blood that Jesus offers as food. Through the centuries, many have marked this day and expressed their gratitude for this great gift with elaborate liturgical processions, during which the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is carried through the streets and pathways of our cities and villages. In receiving this gift, we are fed with the very life of Jesus Christ. But the other aspect of this feast, the one that the reporter discovered in war-torn Sarajevo, must be remembered and celebrated as well. In other words, we who eat the sacramental Body and Blood of Christ thereby become the living, breathing, visible, palpable Body of Christ in the world. When we live in the realization of who we are as the Body of Christ, our very lives become a "procession" that brings the Real Presence into every aspect of the human experience.

Although he had already been a monk for 17 years, Thomas Merton once wrote that the full awareness of his solidarity with all the members of Christ's Body came to him in an "epiphany" (Merton's word) on the corner of Fourth and Walnut Streets in Louisville, KY, in 1958. "I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. From then on," said Merton, "my life became a 'yes' to all that is good in the world and in man...to all that is beautiful in the world, to all men and women who are my brothers and sisters in the world."

(From *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, Doubleday NY: 1966, and Merton's own introduction to the Japanese version of *The Seven Story Mountain*, 1963).

Today's feast puts us in touch, once again, with Merton, the reporter in Sarajevo, and the child he mourned. Today's feast also invites us to acknowledge our oneness with Abram, with Paul, with the Twelve and the multitudes fed by Jesus and with all the other members of the Body of Christ whose lives are necessarily intertwined with our own. Today's feast reminds us that our "yes" or our "Amen" to the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist must be echoed by a "yes" or "Amen" to the Body of

Christ in each of its members. Members of Christ, we are also members of one another. Your children are my children—yes! Your brothers and sisters are my own—Amen!

[Used with permission. Patricia Sanchez, An Ecumenical Worship Resource, *Celebration Publications*, Kansas City, MO]

### Today's Scripture

In today's second reading, we are in the real world of Corinth in southern Greece in the year 57 A.D. There were no churches then and the only place where the Christian community could meet was in a large room of someone's house. The only people with large rooms were the rich. The Eucharist was celebrated after the common meal, but the problem was that while the rich were eating and drinking well, the poor were overlooked and left hungry. Rather than bringing people together, the Eucharist underlined the divisions already in the community. So Paul wrote: "When you go to these meetings, it is not the Lord's Supper you are eating, since when the time comes to eat, everyone is in such a hurry to start his own supper that one person goes hungry while another is getting drunk. Surely you have enough respect for the community not to embarrass poor people" (1 Cor 11:20).

By contrast, in today's Gospel the poor and the hungry are neither overlooked nor embarrassed. At first, however, they are almost dismissed by the apostles. When they are confronted with such a large number in such a lonely place, the apostles' reaction is to send the whole crowd away to look for food and shelter elsewhere. How can they satisfy the hunger of so many people? How can they minister to the needs of so many with so little themselves? And yet, that is precisely what Jesus challenges them to do: "Give them something to eat yourselves." The apostles remind Jesus of the poverty of their resources: they have five loaves and two fish. That's all.

Jesus takes the little they have and shows how this is more than enough to satisfy the crowd. In telling the story, Luke uses the language associated with the Eucharist as he speaks of Jesus saying the blessing...breaking and handing to his disciples. Luke does not say that Jesus multiplies the loaves and fish. The miracle is that when the apostles share the little they have in the name of Jesus, they discover that the crowd is satisfied. There is no need to send anyone away. In fact, there is enough left over to feed another crowd!

### Teaching

*Sometimes when we are faced with people's needs and look at our own resources, we can sit down in a state of depression, believing that we have nothing to give. The hunger of people is so vast and our abilities are so*

*small: what can we do? But all care and all ministry is a sharing from poverty. None of us has all the answers; none of us is millionaires in mercy and compassion. Like the youngest son Simpleton in the fairy tale, we might have only a cinder cake and a sour beer; but the good news is that that is enough for the hunger of the old man. It is also enough to inherit a kingdom.*

*We are challenged to be the body of Christ. Jesus shared himself; he gave himself away; became bread for all who hunger and thirst for the presence of God. And the promise of the Gospel is that if we share our poverty, then we too will inherit a kingdom prepared for us from the beginning of the world.*

[Used with permission. Denis McBride, CSSR., *Seasons of the Word*, Redemptorist Publications)

This Sunday and every day, a big Thank You to all the volunteers at Social Concerns (led by Jerry and Olga Kelly) and all the people at *Daily Bread* for the way they live the Eucharist by feeding the hungry in our little neck of God's Kingdom.

### **On the night he was betrayed**

The following reflection on the experience of betrayal is by Fr. Flor McCarthy, SDB.

*The night before he died, Jesus sat down to table with his apostles. The small group gathered around a table suggests closeness, intimacy, warmth, trust, love. But if betrayal enters into a scene such as this, it cuts deeper, it hurts more. When rifts occur among people we are very close, they are harder to deal with than with people who are not so close.*

*Judas was present. Why did he show up at the Last Supper when he had already made up his mind to betray Jesus? He probably wanted to give the impression that everything was normal, and thus Jesus would not suspect anything.*

*Paul's account of that Last Supper is the oldest we have in the New Testament. He says: "On the same night that he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread, thanked God for it and said, 'This is my Body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me.'"*

*One phrase jumps out at us. The phrase is: "On the night he was betrayed." On that night of all nights. Instead of cutting the apostles off, he gave them a sign of his love: he sat down to an intimate supper with them. Then he said, "Do this in memory of me." This is how they were to remember him. On this night when one of their number betrayed him.*

*We mustn't think that Jesus wasn't hurt by Judas' betrayal. He was hurt and just deeply by it. St. John says that when he began to talk about the traitor, "he was deeply distressed." And no wonder. He had personally chosen and trained Judas. Judas had heard his teaching*

*and witnessed his miracles. He was one of the inner circle. Yet now he was about to betray him. The treachery of a friend is much more hurtful and difficult to deal with than the treachery of an enemy.*

*Betrayal is very hard to deal with. However, those who have been betrayed can take comfort from the fact that Jesus knows how they feel. They do not have to pretend that they are not affected by it. Jesus showed how hurt he was, and talked openly about it. What matters is how we deal with the hurt. It could make us bitter and tempt us to retaliate.*

*In spite of feeling hurt, Jesus did not hit back at Judas. He refused even to expose him in front of the others. But in giving him a morsel of bread (a gesture of friendship), he let him know he was aware of what he was planning. In refusing to point the finger at him, he left the door open for him to return to the fold.*

*What Judas did hurt the other apostles too. After all, he was one of them. They had trusted him, and shared everything with him. They thought they knew him, and yet he turned out to be a traitor. In betraying Jesus he betrayed them too.*

*We do not remember this night for Judas' betrayal. We remember it for the gift that Jesus left us despite that betrayal. The Eucharist should help us to recover from any betrayals we have suffered at the hands of others. And it should help us to avoid betraying anyone else.*

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Have a blessed week,

