

# THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

## FIRST READING

*Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a*

Moses spoke to the people: You shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Do not forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know.

## PSALM

*Ps 147: 12-13. 14-15. 19-20.  
R 12a*

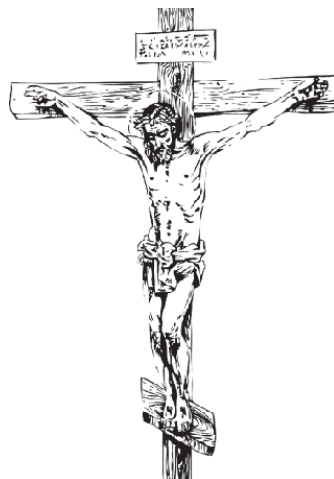
**R O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord!**

BLO Jerusalem, glorify the Lord! O Sion, praise your God! He has strengthened the bars of your gates; he has blessed your children within you. R

He established peace on your borders; he gives you your fill of finest wheat. He sends out his word to the earth, and swiftly runs his command. R

He reveals his word to Jacob; to Israel, his decrees and judgements. He has not dealt thus with other nations; he has not taught them his judgements. R

**R O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord!**



## SECOND READING

*1 Corinthians 10:16-17*

Brothers and Sisters: The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia...**

I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever.

**Alleluia...**

## GOSPEL

*John 6:51-58*

At that time: Jesus said to the Jews, 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'

So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live for ever.'

## REFLECTION

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever."

The Feast of Corpus Christi invites us to stand in wonder before one of the greatest gifts Christ has given His Church: His own Body and Blood. In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks with startling clarity. He does not merely offer teaching, wisdom, or inspiration. He offers Himself. "My flesh is true food and my blood is true drink."

The Fathers of the Church recognised the profound mystery contained in these

words. St Ignatius of Antioch, writing at the beginning of the second century, described the Eucharist as "the medicine of immortality" (Letter to the Ephesians, 20). Through this heavenly food, Christ nourishes His people with the very life of God.

The connection with Israel's journey through the wilderness is unmistakable. God fed His people with manna from heaven, sustaining them on their pilgrimage to the Promised Land. Yet, as St Augustine observed, the manna was only a sign pointing forward to something greater: "The manna signified this bread; God's altar now has what the manna prefigured" (Sermon 130). The bread of heaven is no longer merely a gift from God; it is God Himself given for the life of the world.

St Cyril of Jerusalem urged Christians to receive Holy Communion with confidence and faith: "Since He Himself has declared and said of the bread, 'This is My Body,' who shall dare to doubt any longer?" (Mystagogical Catechesis 4.1). In the Eucharist, Christ fulfils His promise to remain with His people and dwell within them.

Yet the Eucharist is never a private possession. St Paul reminds us that "because there is one bread, we who

are many are one body." As St John Chrysostom taught, the sacrament not only unites us to Christ but also to one another, for "what is the bread? The Body of Christ. What do those become who partake of it? The Body of Christ" (Homily 24 on 1 Corinthians).

As we receive the Bread of Life today, may we be drawn ever more deeply into communion with Christ and, through Him, into loving unity with one another, until we reach the heavenly banquet where every promise is fulfilled.

Yet the gift of the Eucharist is not given to us alone. Having been fed with the Bread of Life, we are sent out to share the life of Christ with others. The same Lord who gathers us at His altar sends us into our homes, workplaces, and communities as witnesses to His love. As St Augustine reminded his congregation, "Be what you see; receive what you are" (Sermon 272). Nourished by Christ's Body and Blood, we become His Body in the world, carrying His presence to those who do not yet know Him. The Eucharist is both our deepest communion and our commissioning, strengthening us to proclaim by word and example the hope we have found in Jesus Christ.