

Weekend Readings & Reflections

June 18-19, 2022: Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: [Genesis 14:18–20](#); [Psalm 110:1–4](#); [1 Corinthians 11:23–26](#); [Luke 9:11–17](#)

Reflection: At the dawn of salvation history, God revealed our future in figures. That's what's going on in today's First Reading: a priest-king comes from Jerusalem (see [Psalm 76:3](#)), offering bread and wine to celebrate the victory of God's beloved servant, Abram, over his foes. By his offering, Melchizedek bestows God's blessings on Abram. He is showing us, too, how one day we will receive God's blessings and in turn "bless God"—how we will give thanks to Him for delivering us from our enemies, sin and death. As Paul recalls in today's Epistle, Jesus transformed the sign of bread and wine, making it a sign of His body and blood, through which God bestows upon us the blessings of His "new covenant." Jesus is "the priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek," that God, in today's Psalm, swears will rule from Zion, the new Jerusalem (see [Hebrews 6:20–7:3](#)). By the miracle of loaves and fishes, Jesus in today's Gospel, again prefigures the blessings of the Eucharist. Notice that He takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to the Twelve. You find the precise order and words in the Last Supper (see [Luke 22:19](#)) and in His celebration of the Eucharist on the first Easter night (see [Luke 24:30](#)). The Eucharist fulfills the offering of Melchizedek. It is the daily miracle of the heavenly high priesthood of Jesus. It is a priesthood He conferred upon the Apostles in ordering them to feed the crowd, in filling exactly twelve baskets with leftover bread—in commanding them on the night He was handed over: "Do this in remembrance of Me." Through His priests He still feeds us in "the deserted place" of our earthly exile. And by this sign He pledges to us a glory yet to come. For as often as we share in His body and blood, we proclaim His victory over death, until He comes again to make His victory our own.

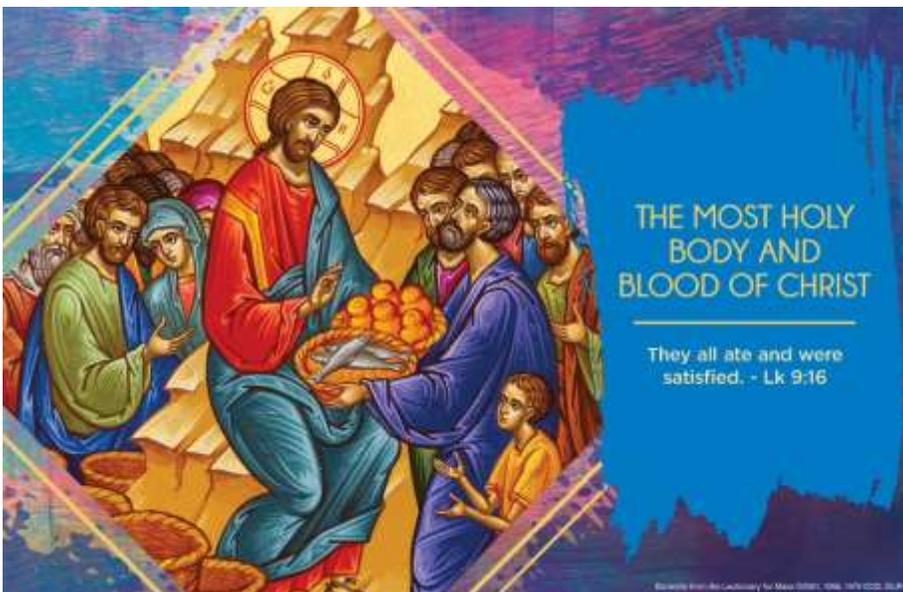
OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Welcome to our discussion for Corpus Christi Sunday, let us begin with prayer from St. Ignatius of Loyola:

All: Lord teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve You as You deserve; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, save that of knowing that I do Your will. Amen.

Leader: This week we are going to look at someone who gave generously from the little he had. Think of the most generous person you know in your life. This person might have helped you out when you needed it or perhaps you have seen them be very generous with others. What are some examples of their generosity? We are going to examine this Sunday's Gospel passage on how Jesus used the generous giving of one little boy to feed an entire crowd. Reflect on the above question as we watch the following video.

Play the video on [FORMED.org](#):
[Opening the Word – Corpus Christi Sunday \(Year C\)](#)



Digging Deeper The Transforming Power of the Eucharist

"The Eucharist, as a mystery to be 'lived,' meets each of us as we are, and makes our concrete existence the place where we experience daily the radical newness of the Christian life. The Eucharistic sacrifice nourishes and increases within us all that we have already received at Baptism, with its call to holiness, and this must be clearly evident from the way individual Christians live their lives. Day by day we become 'a worship pleasing to God' by living our lives as a vocation. Beginning with the liturgical assembly, the sacrament of the Eucharist itself commits us, in our daily lives, to doing everything for God's glory." –Pope Benedict XVI

FIRST READING ~ Genesis 14:18-20 ~

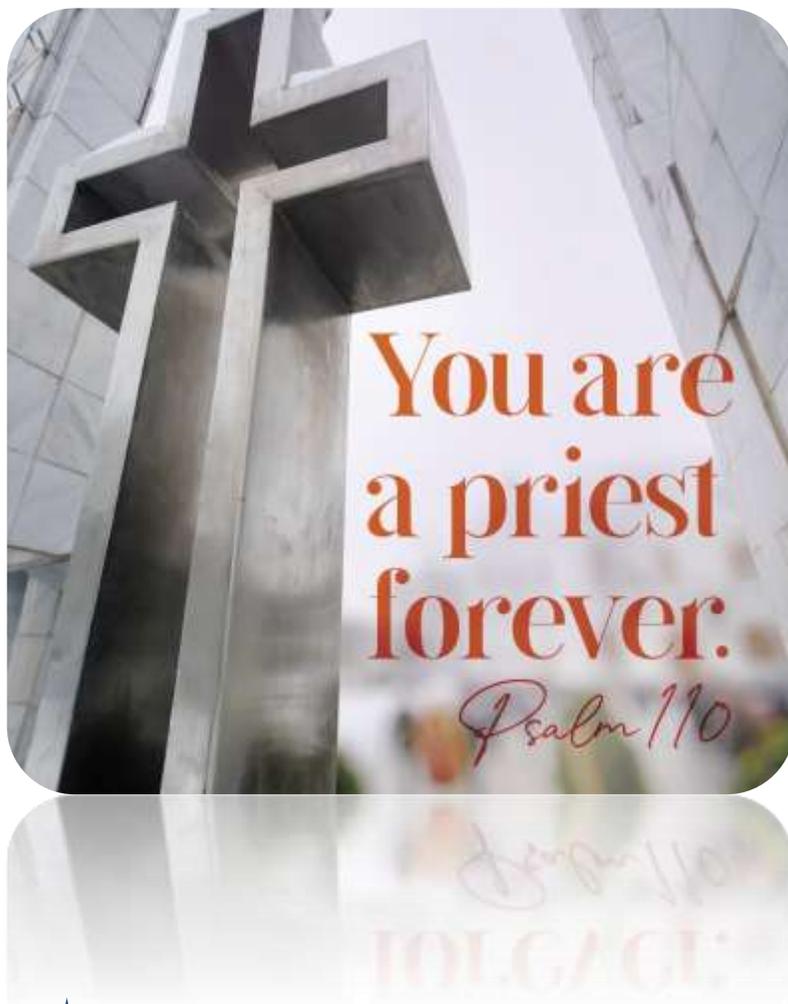
In those days, Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine, and being a priest of God Most High, he blessed Abram with these words: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, the creator of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who delivered your foes into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

When the Church celebrates a special 'Feast' or 'Solemnity' it is frequently the result of controversy. The origin of this feast dates to the 12th Century responding to debate about the true presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

- *When was the first time you can remember debating and seeking to understand Jesus truly present with the gift of his body and blood in the Mass? How would you describe and share this eucharistic faith with a friend today?*

Melchizedek, King of Salem is a very mysterious figure without a genealogy. By his actions he is both King and Priest. And Salem is known as the future city of Jerusalem - the dwelling place of God the Most High for Israel. Abraham has just returned from overcoming 4 kings and rescuing Lot and all his possessions. A King was normally wary of such a visitor as Abraham. They would show welcome by tending to the wounded – hoping that their 'kingdom' would not be pillaged by the visiting army. Strikingly Abraham who represents God's people, offers this Priest / King a tenth of all his possessions! Many writers comment Melchizedek is a sign of an altogether new and divine priesthood able to confer a special blessing from God.

- *How do you understand the Priesthood today?*



SECOND READING ~ 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ~

Brothers and sisters: I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

Paul's letter to the Corinthians is the earliest writing we have of the celebration of the Eucharist (15-20 years before the first gospel). Paul shares this 'tradition' (which means 'handing on') comes from Jesus himself. We are told to 'Do this'. For Jewish people, to do a ritual liturgical action in 'remembrance' was to actually enter and receive the event celebrated. Paul shares the Eucharist proclaims and makes present the cross and victory of Jesus. We receive God's forgiveness but also intimate communion.

- *What does receiving 'holy communion' mean for you?*

GOSPEL ~ Luke 9:11b-17 ~

Jesus spoke to the crowds about the kingdom of God, and he healed those who needed to be cured. As the day was drawing to a close, the Twelve approached him and said, "Dismiss the crowd so that they can go to the surrounding villages and farms and find lodging and provisions; for we are in a deserted place here." He said to them, "Give them some food yourselves." They replied, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have, unless we ourselves go and buy food for all these people." Now the men there numbered about five thousand. Then he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty." They did so and made them all sit down. Then taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. They all ate and were satisfied. And when the leftover fragments were picked up, they filled twelve wicker baskets.

King Herod has just asked a question 'who is this man of whom I hear such wonders'? (Luke 9:9). The Gospel of Luke shares this miracle story of the loaves. Old Testament background stories add texture to this passage where Elisha showed himself working by God's power to feed 100 people with a few loaves. God fed his hungry people in the journey in the desert through Moses. Jesus now feeds the hungry, sick, and poor of Israel. God's hospitality and Jesus' mission is shown. Jesus gets the 12 Apostles to serve the banquet.

- *What might this teach us about the mission of the church in the world to the hungry? The Eucharist? The disciples' attitude was one of inward focus and concern, of 'turn them away' we don't have enough resources.*
- *As you receive Jesus' body and blood will your attitude be one of simply 'looking'? selfishly 'getting'? generously self offering?*



MEDITATION

Who is Jesus for you - and what difference does he make in your life? Many in Israel recognized Jesus as a mighty man of God, even comparing him with the greatest of the prophets. Peter, always quick to respond whenever Jesus spoke, professed that Jesus was truly the "Christ of God" - "the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). No mortal being could have revealed this to Peter, but only God. Through the "eyes of faith" Peter discovered who Jesus truly was. Peter recognized that Jesus was much more than a great teacher, prophet, and miracle worker. Peter was the first apostle to publicly declare that Jesus was the *Anointed One*, consecrated by the Father and sent into the world to redeem a fallen human race enslaved to sin and cut off from eternal life with God (Luke 9:20, Acts 2:14-36). The word for "Christ" in Greek is a translation of the Hebrew word for "Messiah" - both words literally mean the *Anointed One*.

Why did Jesus command his disciples to be silent about his identity as the anointed Son of God? They were, after all, appointed to proclaim the good news to everyone. Jesus knew that they did not yet fully understand his mission and how he would accomplish

it. Cyril of Alexandria (376-444 AD), an early church father, explains the reason for this silence:

There were things yet unfulfilled which must also be included in their preaching about him. They must also proclaim the cross, the passion, and the death in the flesh. They must preach the resurrection of the dead, that great and truly glorious sign by which testimony is borne him that the Emmanuel is truly God and by nature the Son of God the Father. He utterly abolished death and wiped out destruction. He robbed hell, and overthrew the tyranny of the enemy. He took away the sin of the world, opened the gates above to the dwellers upon earth, and united earth to heaven. These things proved him to be, as I said, in truth God. He commanded them, therefore, to guard the mystery by a seasonable silence until the whole plan of the dispensation should arrive at a suitable conclusion.
(*Commentary on Luke, Homily 49*)

Jesus told his disciples that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and die in order that God's work of redemption might be accomplished. How startled the disciples were when they heard this word. How different are God's thoughts and ways from our thoughts and ways (Isaiah 55:8). It was through humiliation, suffering, and death on the cross that Jesus broke the powers of sin and death and won for us eternal life and freedom from the slavery of sin and from the oppression of our enemy, Satan, the father of lies and the deceiver of humankind.

If we want to share in the victory of the Lord Jesus, then we must also take up our cross and follow where he leads us. What is the "cross" that you and I must take up each day? When my will crosses (does not align) with God's will, then his will must be done. To know Jesus Christ is to know the power of his victory on the cross where he defeated sin and conquered death through his resurrection. The Holy Spirit gives each of us the gifts and strength we need to live as sons and daughters of God. The Holy Spirit gives us *faith* to know the Lord Jesus personally as our Redeemer, and the *power* to live the gospel faithfully, and the *courage* to witness to others the joy, truth, and freedom of the Gospel. Who do you say that Jesus is?

- *Who is Jesus for you - and what difference does he make in your life?*
- *What are the "crosses" that you are asked to take up each day?*

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: In closing let us now pray together:

ALL: Lord Jesus, I believe and profess that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Take my life, my will, and all that I have, that I may be wholly Yours now and forever. Amen

Leader: (if time, let us offer up our intercessions ... St. Michael... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...)

[Opening reflection was shared from St. Paul Center at <https://stpaulcenter.com/studies-tools/sunday-bible-reflections>]

[video can be found at FORMED.ORG "Opening the Word". Additional reflections can be found at FORMED in "Opening the Word"]

[Discussion questions created by Fr Frank Bird sm, Marist Priest, and distributed by www.maristlitynz.org, were shared with permission from www.livingtheword.org.nz.]

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