

## **The Body and Blood of Christ B.18;** Ex 24:3-8; Heb 9:11-15; Mark 14:12-26

This is a remarkable feast day because it calls upon us to recognize the very real sacrificial character of *our* presence in the world....

To begin, it has been said ...

**Life is ours to be spent, not saved.** – D.H. Lawrence

**The question is, “How are we *spending* our lives?”**

*Initially, that question was answered by a small group of wanderers/slaves to be called Israel. Exodus reveals a God who cares deeply about us, about life. At Sinai, the Israelites gather with Moses to enact **the Covenant** – a relationship to be built on trust & love. “**With one voice**” they pledge to walk with a God and become the people who show the Way to God. Ritual sacrifices seal & bind the covenant parties. Sacrificial lamb’s blood is **splashed on the altar, then Moses sprinkled the people** – Why? **Blood is the life force.***

The people *share* in the divine character of the sacrifice:

**God has chosen to share their existence, their blood!**

Communion will follow – a shared meal with God!

**The Covenant began, but God’s compassion did not stop there ....**

*Theologian James Allison helps us to understand this relationship. “God is the primary **actor in the drama of Creation & Redemption**. In the Temple, on **the Day of Atonement**, the high priest entered the *Holy of Holies*, acting *in the place of God*, to spread the blood of the sacrificial lamb, the symbolic blood of God, on the Mercy Seat. This symbolized *God offering Himself* in self-sacrifice*

*... for the people* in this priestly gesture.”

*The Letter to the Hebrews* “explains that through Christ the gestures that had been symbolic became real and eternal. The high priest’s used sheep’s blood which represented God’s self-sacrifice, but Christ shed his own blood – **“once for all.”**

**Christ saw *his sacrifice* as for all people and all time.”**

(Source: Allison, *Jesus the Forgiving Victim*, Celebration, 06/2018)

**Our blood relationship with God was to develop even more....**

Knowing this background what does *the Last Supper* in Mark’s Gospel actually mean? We see that Jesus boldly revises the traditional Passover meal! At the Last Supper they *all sat as equals* then, he blessed the bread, *he inserted himself*,

**“Take it. This is my Body.”**

**In an unforgettable, shocking addition**, Jesus recited the prayers & blessings recalling God’s saving action in their history *adding himself to that story*. This action expressed **the meaning and the message of Jesus**. It revealed him as **God’s self-offering** for humanity & taught how humanity can accept divine life.

**Shocking? Yes. Sacrilege? No.**

Jesus equated himself with *the God* who reaches out to humanity in covenant love. This sacrament *was and is* his offer of Communion that contains divine destiny.

**2 What does this mean?** *St. Augustine* gave us these time-honored insights: “So now, if you want to understand the body of Christ, listen to the Apostle Paul speaking ...” “You are the body of Christ, member for member” [1Cor 12:27]. You are saying “*Amen*” to what you are: your response is a personal signature, affirming your faith... Be a member of Christ’s body, then, so that your “*Amen*”

... may ring true.” **Shocking? Yes. Sacrilege? No. *Be what you see. Become what you receive. Spend your time being Christ ... in your world.*** Then *taking the cup* he reinterpreted the ritual once more. *Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them and they all drank from it.” He said to them ... this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.”*

**What does it mean ... to take the cup?**

After they drank Jesus explained that it was the cup he had promised they would drink with him (Mk 10:39). It was their share in the cross he would take up, the symbol of their losing their lives *for him and the Gospel* in such a way that by losing their lives they would be saved. Disciples are to spend their blood for others.

***Take it. This is the cup of my blood.***

**Drink deeply that all might be saved. God’s own blood runs in our hearts!**

**Why is this reality so important?**

**Our blood, our presence matters for salvation.**

Receiving the body and blood of Christ is not only a privilege. It is a life-long commitment to live according to God's will. ***The Eucharist*** is a gift given to the entire world. We, like Israel before us, are called, are empowered, to give life, to care for our neighbors and enemies, to reach out to the outcast and the broken.

We have to treat everyone with respect and honor.

We are part of a community that has the obligation to live recognizing the presence of Christ in all his manifestations. To eat the bread and drink the blood of Christ

is to enter the mind of God where each one of us is a reflection of his son, Jesus.

We are to love ***Creation into the Kingdom of God.*** (Adapted: *Nuestra Parroquia*, 6/2018)

**How are you spending your Life?**

**At this Eucharistic Liturgy, remember what Jesus said, “*Amen I say to you. I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine, until I drink it new in the kingdom of God.*”** A glorious new Future has been set in motion for all of us ... by Jesus!

**Shocking? Yes. Sacrilege? No.**

***“Receive what you are and become what you receive;***

***be flesh and blood given for the life of the world.” - St. Augustine***