

- Well...today we celebrate the great feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ—the feast of *Corpus Christi*—which is the Eucharist we have at every Mass...the “sacrament of sacraments, and the totally unprecedented and unmerited gift of God to us.
- The Eucharist is the Real Presence of Christ Himself upon the altar...within the tabernacle...that we receive within us at the Mass.
- Yes, the Holy Spirit dwells within us as His temples, but with the Eucharist we have Christ within us in a very tangible way...and the grace emanating from the Eucharist—if we receive Him worthily—brings us ever closer to Him.
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- But we must receive Him worthily. And how do we do that?
- No one is truly worthy to receive God; His infinite holiness speaks to the truth of that.
- But through God’s love He offers Himself to us in this precious sacrament nevertheless.
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- There is so much that can and need be said about the Eucharist, but I’d like to reiterate a few practicalities today that always need periodic review and reminder.
- First: always remember our obligation—but much more so our privilege—to participate in Mass at least every Sunday and Holy Day; unless one is ill, or caring for the ill, or simply unable to attend due to work or traveling or the like, the Church requires this under pain of grave sin.
- So little is required of us, and yet God gives us so much.
- The sacrifice of Christ is the pinnacle of not only salvation history, but also of all history.

- We're tempted to ask: "Oh, how can that be, with billions of years behind us, and billions of years ahead...in the vastness of the universe?"
- Be we are too over-awed by quantity, and not enough by quality.
- We are made in the image of God...sharing in a spiritual life above the material...which makes man (and angels) the greatest of all God's Creation.
- That is the message of the book of Genesis. Only when Man is created is the universe described as "very" good.
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- So...don't let temptations via our passions and the deceptions of evil lure you away from this obligation of gratitude and worship.
- Jesus DIED for us; it seems the very least we can do is haul our carcasses out of bed...or wait to go to the golf course 'til after Mass, or whatever.
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- Secondly, we must receive the Eucharist in a state of grace—meaning without unconfessed mortal sin.
- Imagine giving a friend your most cherished portrait of your beloved son...and he goes: "Eh; whatever"...and tosses it into the mud, saying: "I'll clean it up later."
- That's sort of what we do—except infinitely worse—when we receive Christ when muddied by mortal sin.
- Be washed clean of mortal sin in the confessional before receiving God Himself.
- Have we not read Jesus' words: "...*if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be*

reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”
(Mat 5:23-24 RSV)

- How much more important is being cleansed of our sins against God prior to receiving Himself in the Eucharist.
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- And, finally...yes, only those of our Catholic faith may receive the Eucharist. This is the 2000-year-old tradition and theology of the Church.
- Not that we despise our non-Catholic brothers and sisters; quite the opposite. But we have the responsibility to at least try to ensure that the Eucharist is received by those who truly believe it IS the Body and Blood of Christ; most non-Catholics do not.
- Also, the state of the soul is very important; that's why our teaching of not receiving the Eucharist in mortal sin.
- For St. Paul writes: *“Whoever...eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord...For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves.”*
(1 Corinthians 11:27-29)
- And St. Justin wrote in the 100s—very soon after the apostles:
“No one may share the Eucharist with us unless he believes what we teach is true, unless he is washed in the regenerating waters of baptism for the remission of his sins, and unless he lives in accordance with the principles given us by Christ.” (Breviary, Vol. II, pg 694)
- In other words, essentially: 1) be Catholic, and, 2) be free of mortal sin.
- Now...if our non-Catholic brethren want to receive the Eucharist, tell them: “We have a plan for YOU! It's called RCIA, and you, too, may receive when you join our Church.”

- In fact...one of the greatest things we can do in life is to draw others to Christ and to His Church...so that they CAN receive His Body and Blood.
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- One person wrote to me recently: “I can’t imagine Jesus refusing guests a meal!”
- But the Eucharist is not simply a meal; it is God Himself... the holiest thing in material existence.
- Yes, Jesus invited anyone to His feeding of the 5000 with bread and fish...but He reserved attendance at the first Eucharist of the Last Supper to who had followed Him faithfully and believed in Him and in all that He taught.
- Do we, therefore, not have the same obligation?
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- Yes...the Eucharist—by Jesus’ own testimony—is truly His Body and the Blood—simply remaining under the appearance of bread and wine: *“This IS my Body...This IS my Blood.”*
- So the Eucharist must be treated with, received and adored with the utmost attention, reverence and devotion...for within it is our very salvation.
- For Jesus assures us: *“...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”* (Joh 6:53-54 RSV)

Reading 1

[Ex 24:3-8](#)

When Moses came to the people
and related all the words and ordinances of the LORD,
they all answered with one voice,
"We will do everything that the LORD has told us."
Moses then wrote down all the words of the LORD and,
rising early the next day,
he erected at the foot of the mountain an altar
and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.
Then, having sent certain young men of the Israelites
to offer holocausts and sacrifice young bulls
as peace offerings to the LORD,
Moses took half of the blood and put it in large bowls;
the other half he splashed on the altar.
Taking the book of the covenant, he read it aloud to the people,
who answered, "All that the LORD has said, we will heed and do."
Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying,
"This is the blood of the covenant
that the LORD has made with you
in accordance with all these words of his."

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 116:12-13, 15-16, 17-18](#)

R. (13) I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord.

or:

R. Alleluia.

How shall I make a return to the LORD
for all the good he has done for me?

The cup of salvation I will take up,
and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

R. I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Precious in the eyes of the LORD
is the death of his faithful ones.

I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;
you have loosed my bonds.

R. I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord.

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

My vows to the LORD I will pay
in the presence of all his people.

R. **I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

Reading II

[Heb 9:11-15](#)

Brothers and sisters:

When Christ came as high priest

of the good things that have come to be,
passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle
not made by hands, that is, **not belonging to this creation,**
he entered once for all into the sanctuary,
not with the blood of goats and calves
but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.

For if the blood of goats and bulls
and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes
can sanctify those who are defiled
so that their flesh is cleansed,
how much more will the blood of Christ,
who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God,
cleanse our consciences from dead works
to worship the living God.

For this reason he is mediator of a new covenant:
since a death has taken place for deliverance
from transgressions under the first covenant,
those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.

Gospel

[Mk 14:12-16, 22-26](#)

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread,
when they sacrificed the Passover lamb,
Jesus' disciples said to him,
"Where do you want us to go
and prepare for you to eat the Passover?"
He sent two of his disciples and said to them,
"Go into the city and a man will meet you,

carrying a jar of water.

Follow him.

Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house,

'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room
where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"'

Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready.

Make the preparations for us there."

The disciples then went off, entered the city,

and found it just as he had told them;

and they prepared the Passover.

While they were eating,

he took bread, said the blessing,

broke it, gave it to them, and said,

"Take it; this is my body."

Then he took a 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.

Amen, I say to you,

I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine

until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Then, after singing a hymn,

they went out to the Mount of Olives.