

Multi-week theme: This is my body, which is given up for you.

Today's theme: Eucharist and grace

- Ah...so much to say...so little time.
- We have kind of a divine “double-whammy” today—the Solemnity of the Assumption on Saturday, and this wonderful pre-affirmation of Jesus in our Gospel of what would be His gift of His Body and Blood in the Eucharist.
- The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is, of course, a truth of our faith...meaning, of course, that, at the end of her life, the Blessed Mother was assumed incorrupt body and soul into Heaven. This was solemnly defined by Pope Pius XII in 1950—on All Saints Day, no less.
- As the pope wrote in his apostolic constitution defining this—*Munificentissimus Deus* (“The Most Bountiful God):
- *“...the revered Mother of God...immaculate in her conception, a most perfect virgin in her divine motherhood, the noble associate of the divine Redeemer who has won a complete triumph over sin and its consequences, finally obtained, as the supreme culmination of her privileges, that she should be preserved free from the corruption of the tomb and that, like her own Son, having overcome death, she might be taken up body and soul to the glory of heaven where, as Queen, she sits in splendor at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages.*
- The knowledge of the Assumption comes from the earliest times of the Church...and while not explicitly in the Bible, it certainly is whispered of, in the book of Revelation: *“Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, voices, peals of thunder...And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown*

of twelve stars...” (Rev 11:19-12:1)...showing Mary as true Ark of the Covenant.

- Now in our Gospel today we have the climax of Jesus’ soliloquy on what He would leave to us as His perpetual presence, and unparalleled, unprecedented source of grace: His Body and Blood in the Eucharist—the sacrament of sacrament from which the grace of all the other sacraments flow...because the Eucharist is Christ Himself.
- How can we mistake that? He tells us here most definitively: “... *UNLESS you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you...my flesh is true food, my blood is true drink.*”...at which point everyone in His audience was absolutely confused...and many refused to remain with Him.
- But the apostles, though they did not understand, stayed with Him through their faith...remembering the otherwise impossible healings and signs that He had performed that proved that He was from God.
- And then at the Last Supper, Jesus consecrates the bread and wine to be the first Eucharist, as He says: “*Take and eat...this IS my body. Take and drink...this IS my blood.*”
- In the Eucharist we receive not only grace, but the fountain of grace—God Himself—within us...recalling what Jesus said a few chapters earlier: “...*whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.*” (Joh 4:14 RSV)
- And, of course, St. Paul confirms this belief of the early Church when he says: “*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?*” (1Cor 10:16 RSV)

- We see, then, why it is so foolish to choose anything over the Mass...or to choose any sin over the state of grace which allows us to bring God Himself into our bodies and into our souls.
- Yes, we may grasp some momentary pleasure or joy in worldly things, but then it is gone.
- But...God is the “un-lose-able” and eternal food of our soul...
“My flesh is true food, my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.”
- Why else would martyrs go to their deaths singing God’s praises? REAL people, not storybook characters. Romans died refusing to sacrifice to false gods. Nuns who sang their way to the guillotine.
- In our day Russians, Chinese, Koreans, Iraqis, Syrians...who refuse to give up Christ and are beheaded or beaten to death.
- And WE miss Mass because we’re “too tired”?
- Those faithful to death realize the ephemeral nature of this life, and the absolute and perpetual nature of the next...while those who trust in the things of this world and ignore the divine are the walking dead. Jesus says such have no life in them.
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- Our mission is to help those realize the truths of Christ—
courageous in reflecting Jesus in word and example...
remembering how Jesus says: *“...whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”* (Mark 8:38 RSV)
- Jesus said to us over and over: *“Do not be afraid.”*
- Who cares whether someone approves of us or not for the moment, as long as we are approved by God forever?

- As it says in the Liturgy of the Hours for martyrs: *“We are warriors now, fighting on the battlefield of faith, and God sees all we do; the angels watch and so does Christ. What honor and glory and joy, to do battle in the presence of God, and to have Christ approve our victory.”*

Reading 1

[Prv 9:1-6](#)

Wisdom has built her house,
she has set up her seven columns;
she has dressed her meat, mixed her wine,
yes, she has spread her table.
She has sent out her maidens; she calls
from the heights out over the city:
“Let whoever is simple turn in here;
To the one who lacks understanding, she says,
Come, eat of my food,
and drink of the wine I have mixed!
Forsake foolishness that you may live;
advance in the way of understanding.”

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7](#)

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the LORD;
the lowly will hear me and be glad.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Glorify the LORD with me,
let us together extol his name.
I sought the LORD, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,
and your faces may not blush with shame.
When the poor one called out, the LORD heard,
and from all his distress he saved him.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Reading II

[Eph 5:15-20](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Watch carefully how you live,
not as foolish persons but as wise,

making the most of the opportunity,
because the days are evil.

Therefore, do not continue in ignorance,
but try to understand what is the will of the Lord.

And do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery,

but be filled with the Spirit,

addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,

singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts,

giving thanks always and for everything

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.

Gospel

[Jn 6:51-58](#)

Jesus said to the crowds:

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven;

whoever eats this bread will live forever;

and the bread that I will give

is my flesh for the life of the world.”

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying,

“How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

Jesus said to them,

“Amen, amen, I say to you,

unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,

you do not have life within you.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood

has eternal life,

and I will raise him on the last day.

For my flesh is true food,

and my blood is true drink.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood

remains in me and I in him.

Just as the living Father sent me

and I have life because of the Father,

so also the one who feeds on me

will have life because of me.

This is the bread that came down from heaven.

Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died,

whoever eats this bread will live forever.”