

THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST, Year B



First Reading † Exodus 24:3-8

This is the blood of the Covenant that the Lord has made with you.

A reading from the book of Exodus

Moses went and told the people all the Lord's words and all the laws, and all the people answered with one voice, saying,

'All the words the Lord has spoken we will carry out!'

Moses wrote down all the Lord's words, and early next morning he built an altar at the foot of the mountain, with twelve standing-stones for the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelites to offer burnt offerings and sacrifice bullocks to the Lord as communion sacrifices. Moses then took half the blood and put it into basins, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then, taking the Book of the Covenant, he read it to the listening people, who then said,

'All the words the Lord has spoken we will carry out.'

Moses then took the blood and sprinkled it over the people, saying,

'This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you, in all these words.'

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial † Psalm 115:12-13.15-18

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

How can I repay the Lord
for all his goodness to me?
The cup of salvation I will raise;
I will call on the name of the Lord.

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

How precious in the eyes of the Lord
is the death of his faithful.
Your servant, Lord, your servant am I,
the child of your handmaid;
you have loosened my bonds.

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

A thanksgiving sacrifice I will make;
I will call on the name of the Lord.
My vows to the Lord I will fulfil
before all his people.

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

Second Reading † Hebrews 9:11-15

The blood of Christ will purify our inner selves.

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

But now Christ has come, as the high priest of all the blessings which were to come. He has passed through the greater, the more perfect tent, not made by human hands, that is, not of this created order; and he has entered the sanctuary once and for all, taking with him not the blood of goats and bull calves, but his own blood, having won an eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkled on those who have incurred defilement, may restore their bodily purity. How much more will the blood of Christ, who offered himself, blameless as he was, to God through the eternal Spirit, purify our conscience from dead actions so that we can worship the living God?

For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, now that a death has occurred to liberate from the sins committed under an earlier covenant, those who have been called to an eternal inheritance may receive the promise.

The word of the Lord.

Sequence

Sing forth, O Zion, sweetly sing
The praises of thy Shepherd-King,
In hymns and canticles divine;

Dare all thou canst, thou hast no song
Worthy his praises to prolong,
So far surpassing powers like thine.

Today no theme of common praise
Forms the sweet burden of thy lays –
The living, life-dispensing food –

That food which at the sacred board
Unto the brethren twelve our Lord
His parting legacy bestowed.

Then be the anthem clear and strong,
Thy fullest note, thy sweetest song,
The very music of the breast:

For now shines forth the day sublime
That brings remembrance of the time
When Jesus first his table blest.

Within our new King's banquet-hall
They meet to keep the festival
That closed the ancient paschal rite:

The old is by the new replaced;
The substance hath the shadow chased;
And rising day dispels the night.

Christ willed what he himself had done
Should be renewed while time should run,
In memory of his parting hour:

Thus, tutored in his school divine,
We consecrate the bread and wine;
And lo – a Host of saving power.

This faith to Christian men is given –
Bread is made flesh by words from heaven:
Into his blood the wine is turned:

What though it baffles nature's powers
Of sense and sight? This faith of ours
Proves more than nature e'er discerned.

Concealed beneath the two-fold sign,
Meet symbols of the gifts divine,
There lie the mysteries adored:

The living body is our food;
Our drink the ever-precious blood;
In each, one undivided Lord.

Not he that eateth it divides
The sacred food, which whole abides
Unbroken still, nor knows decay;

Be one, or be a thousand fed,
They eat alike that living bread
Which, still received, ne'er wastes away.

The good, the guilty share therein,
With sure increase of grace or sin,
The ghostly life, or ghostly death:

Death to the guilty; to the good
Immortal life. See how one food
Man's joy or woe accomplisheth.

We break the Sacrament, but bold
And firm thy faith shall keep its hold,
Deem not the whole doth more enfold

Than in the fractured part resides
Deem not that Christ doth broken lie,
'Tis but the sign that meets the eye,

The hidden deep reality
In all its fullness still abides.

Behold the bread of angels, sent
For pilgrims in their banishment,
The bread for God's true children meant,

That may not unto dogs be given:
Oft in the olden types foreshowed;
In Isaac on the altar bowed,

And in the ancient paschal food,
And in the manna sent from heaven.

Come then, good shepherd, bread divine,
Still show to us thy mercy sign;
Oh, feed us still, still keep us thine;

So may we see thy glories shine
In fields of immortality;
O thou, the wisest, mightiest, best,

Our present food, our future rest,
Come, make us each thy chosen guest,
Co-heirs of thine, and comrades blest
With saints whose dwelling is with thee.

Gospel Acclamation † John 6:51-52

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
I am the living bread from heaven, says the Lord;
whoever eats this bread will live for ever.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Gospel † Mark 14:12-16.22-26

This is my body. This is my blood.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they used to sacrifice the Passover lamb, his disciples said to Jesus,

‘Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?’

So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them,

‘Go into the city and someone will meet you carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and wherever he enters say to the owner of the house,

“The teacher says: Where is the room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?”

He will show you a large upper room ready set out. Make the preparations for us there.’

The disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and prepared the Passover.

And as they were eating he took bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it, gave it to them and said,

‘Take it, this is my body.’

Then taking a cup, after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all drank from it, and he said to them,

‘This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for many.
Amen I say to you, I shall never again drink wine
until that day when I drink new wine in the kingdom of God.’

Having sung the psalms they left for the Mount of Olives.

The Gospel of the Lord.