

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Year B

First Reading

Ex 24:3-8

A reading from the book of Exodus

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

Moses went and told the people all the commands of the Lord and all the ordinances. In answer, all the people said with one voice, 'We will observe all the commands that the Lord has decreed.' Moses put all the commands of the Lord into writing, 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 directed certain young Israelites to offer holocausts and to immolate bullocks to the Lord as communion sacrifices. Half of the blood Moses took up and put into basins, the other half he cast on the altar. And taking the Book of the Covenant he read it to the listening people, and they said, 'We will observe all that the Lord has decreed; we will obey.' Then Moses took the blood and cast it towards the people. 'This' he said 'is the blood of the Covenant that the Lord has made with you, containing all these rules.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 115:12-13. 15-18. R. v.13

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

or

(R.) Alleluia!

1. How can I repay the Lord
for his goodness to me?
The cup of salvation I will raise;
I will call on the Lord's name. (R.)
2. O precious in the eyes of the Lord
is the death of his faithful.
Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;
you have loosened my bonds. (R.)
3. A thanksgiving sacrifice I make:
I will call on the Lord's name.
My vows to the Lord I will fulfil
before all his people. (R.)

Second Reading

Heb 9:11-15

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

The blood of Christ will purify our inner selves.

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, which is better than one made by men's hands because it 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 for us. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer are sprinkled on those who have incurred defilement and they restore the holiness of their outward lives; how much more effectively the blood of Christ, who offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God through the eternal Spirit, can purify our inner self from dead actions so that we do our service to the living God.

He brings a new covenant, as the mediator, only so that the people who were called to an eternal inheritance may actually receive what was promised: his death took place to cancel the sins that infringed the earlier covenant.

Sequence

The sequence, Sing forth, O Zion, may be said or sung in its longer or shorter form.

longer form

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 blessed.

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

Jn 6:51-52

Alleluia, alleluia!

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

Alleluia!