

Sunday Message

THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

THE WORD

Year C • 22 June 2025 • Colour: White • Psalter Week 4

BREAD OF LIFE

LUKE 9:11-17



One of the worst outrages of the Second World War was the siege of Leningrad (St Petersburg), from September 1941.

The Nazis surrounded the city soon after invading the Soviet Union, and their strategy was to starve its 2.5 million citizens into submission. The siege lasted 900 days. As food stocks dwindled, the population starved. Over 800,000 people died from hunger and hypothermia. The situation was so dire, some resorted to cannibalism.

But there remained one route into the city. Lake Ladoga lies east of Leningrad. As soon as it froze solid that first winter of 1941/42, Russians were able to mark out a route across the lake that conveys of trucks and sleighs could take at night when they were safer from German attack. Despite many setbacks, scores of transports got through – bringing food and supplies into the city and evacuating the sick and injured. Citizens gave a name to that winter ice road across Lake Ladoga. They called it the Road of Life because it provided them with the essentials they needed to survive. The Road of Life gave them bread for life.

Leningrad survived the siege and, after the war, began its slow recovery. But its people never forgot that without the Road of Life across the frozen lake, the city would have capitulated. The Road of Life provided bread of life, literally.

The Gospel for today's feast tells of the feeding of the 5000. It's one of several stories in the Gospels that describe a miraculous multiplying of food. Jesus can see that the people are hungry, and he feeds them. It's always the same. Jesus encounters people in distress, and aches with compassion for them. He heals them, feeds them, restores them, gives them life. Everything he says and does gives life.

Today's feast and the story of the multiplication of the loaves are a reminder to us of what the Eucharist means. The Eucharist is a celebration during which God nourishes us with God's own life. In John's Gospel, Jesus tells us: "I am the Bread of Life." The Eucharist is our food for life on the road of life. It helps us face the challenges of every day. Just as the Road of Life provided the people of Leningrad with the bread they needed to survive the war, the Eucharist provides us with the sustenance we need on our road of life. And it calls us together, draws us together, makes us one. Sharing the one bread from the one table makes us one family, responsible for each other. This is what we celebrate on today's great feast. ■

REFLECT

"I wish to reflect on how we live the Eucharist in our daily lives, as a Church and individual Christians. First, the Eucharist affects the way we see others. In his life, Christ manifested his love by being with people, and by sharing their desires and problems. So too the Eucharist brings us together with others – young and old, poor and affluent, neighbours and visitors. The Eucharist calls us to see all of them as our brothers and sisters, and to see in them the face of Christ.

Second, in the Eucharist we experience the forgiveness of God and the call to forgive. We celebrate the Eucharist not because we are worthy, but because we recognise our need for God's mercy, incarnate in Jesus Christ. In the Eucharist, we renew the gift of the Body and Blood of Christ for the remission of sins, and our hearts are enlarged to receive and show mercy.

Third, in the Eucharistic celebration, we are nourished as the Christian community by Christ's Word and Life. It is from the Eucharist that the Church receives continually her identity and mission. It is in our celebration that Christ fills us with his grace, so that our lives may be consonant with our worship of God in the Liturgy. Let us live the Eucharist in a spirit of faith and prayer, with the certainty that the Lord will bring to fulfilment all that he has promised."

Pope Francis ■

LEARN

The feast of the Body and Blood of Christ reminds us of the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the church

Jesus is the Bread of Life

In the Eucharist we receive the Body and Blood of Christ

We are Christ's hands and Christ's feet

SAY

"Lord, you nourish me with the Bread of Life on the road of life. Help me to share that love with those who need it most. Amen."

PRAY

Pray for a deeper appreciation of the gift of the Eucharist.

DO

Try to visit the Blessed Sacrament as often as you can.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

He fed them with the finest wheat
and satisfied them with honey from the rock.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament
have left us a memorial of your Passion,
grant us, we pray,
so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body
and Blood
that we may always experience in ourselves
the fruits of your redemption.
Who live and reign with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Gn 14:18-20

A reading from the book of Genesis
Melchizedek king of Salem brought bread and
wine; he was a priest of God Most High. He
pronounced this blessing:
‘Blessed be Abraham by God Most High, creator of
heaven and earth,
and blessed be God Most High for handing over
your enemies to you.’
And Abraham gave him a tithe of everything.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 109 (110):1-4

Response:

**You are a priest for ever, a priest like
Melchizedek of old.**

1. The Lord's revelation to my Master:
'Sit on my right:
I will put your foes beneath your feet.' (R.)
2. The Lord will send from Zion
your sceptre of power:
rule in the midst of all your foes. (R.)
3. A prince from the day of your birth
on the holy mountains;
from the womb before the daybreak I begot
you. (R.)
4. The Lord has sworn an oath he will not
change.
'You are a priest for ever,
a priest like Melchizedek of old.' (R.)

SECOND READING

1 Cor 11:23-26

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians

This is what I received from the Lord, and in turn
passed on to you: that on the same night that
he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some
bread, and thanked God for it and broke it, and
he said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do
this as a memorial of me.' In the same way he
took the cup after supper, and said, 'This cup is
the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you
drink it, do this as a memorial of me.' Until the
Lord comes, therefore, every time you eat this
bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming
his death.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SEQUENCE (shorter form)

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.
Amen. Alleluia.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the living bread which
has come down from heaven, says the Lord.
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Lk 9:11-17

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke

Jesus made the crowds welcome and talked to
them about the kingdom of God; and he cured
those who were in need of healing.

It was late afternoon when the Twelve came
to him and said, 'Send the people away, and
they can go to the villages and farms round
about to find lodging and food; for we are in
a lonely place here.' He replied, 'Give them
something to eat yourselves.' But they said,
'We have no more than five loaves and two fish,
unless we are to go ourselves and buy food
for all these people.' For there were about five
thousand men. But he said to his disciples,
'Get them to sit down in parties of about fifty.'
They did so and made them all sit down. Then
he took the five loaves and the two fish, raised
his eyes to heaven, and said the blessing over
them; then he broke them and handed them
to his disciples to distribute among the crowd.
They all ate as much as they wanted, and when
the scraps remaining were collected they filled
twelve baskets.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant your Church, O Lord, we pray,
the gifts of unity and peace,
whose signs are to be seen in mystery
in the offerings we here present.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, O Lord, we pray,
that we may delight for all eternity
in that share in your divine life,
which is foreshadowed in the present age
by our reception of your precious Body and
Blood.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.