

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the living bread from heaven, says the Lord;

whoever eats this bread will live for ever.

Alleluia!

## GOSPEL

Lk 9:11-17

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

*They all ate and were filled.*

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.

# Breaking Open the Word



# THE SAVING WORD

THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (CORPUS CHRISTI) / C

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## SHARING JESUS' MINISTRY

Surprising as it may seem, even though the letters of Paul were written some years before the Gospels, they rarely mention directly sayings of the Lord. One of the exceptions is when Paul sets out to remind his wayward converts at Corinth about the true meaning of the Eucharist. They had become all too complacent about their celebration of the Eucharist and, as far as Paul was concerned, rather than proclaiming the Lord's death till his return they were responsible for his death! To bring them back on the right track Paul reminds them of the tradition that he had received (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3-5).

Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul all hand on traditions about the Last Supper but Luke (22:19-20) and Paul (1 Corinthians 11:23-25) have a couple of special emphases that are worth noting. Firstly, they both focus on the Eucharist as a way of actively remembering the saving death of Jesus. Secondly, they both make it clear that in Jesus' blood a new stage in salvation history has arrived; a new covenant now binds us to God.

In the early church, the feeding of the five thousand was related in such a way that it reflected the Last Supper. Jesus taking the bread, breaking it, and giving it to the disciples to distribute, all mirrored elements of the Last Supper. What was new was that now the disciples were called to share in Jesus' ministry of welcome and hospitality; a ministry we are still called to share.

Christopher Monaghan CP

## FIRST READING

Gen 14:18-20

A reading from the book of Genesis

*Melchizedek brought bread and wine.*

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.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 109:1-4. R. v. 4

**R.** You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

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

*Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming the death of the Lord.*

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.

**R.** Thanks be to God

## SEQUENCE

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 foreshadowed;  
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.

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