

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) He fed them with the finest wheat and satisfied them with honey from the rock.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 109)

ANTIPHON: You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

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

LECTOR: The Lord's revelation to my Master: "Sit on my right: I will put your foes beneath your feet." **R.**

LECTOR: The Lord will send from Zion your sceptre of power: rule in the midst of all your foes. **R.**

LECTOR: A prince from the day of your birth on the holy mountains; from the womb before the daybreak I begot you. **R.**

LECTOR: The Lord has sworn an oath he will not change. "You are a priest for ever, a priest like Melchizedek of old." **R.**

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

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.

TODAY'S READINGS Genesis 14:18-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Luke 9:11-17

NEXT WEEK (13th Sunday, Year C) 1 Kings 19:16, 19-21; Ps 15; Galatians 5:1, 13-18; Luke 9:51-62

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Gifts of bread and wine



19 June 2022 Body and Blood of Christ Year C

Today's readings introduce us to the mysterious High Priest, Melchizedek, who has an encounter with Abraham, the better-known Israelite figure. Abraham, as we know, became the founding father of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

However, it is Melchizedek who prefigures Jesus' actions at the Last Supper by giving Abraham gifts of bread and wine. This is brought to further light in today's Psalm which acknowledges Melchizedek as "a priest forever" thereby foreshadowing Jesus' royal priesthood demonstrated through his sacrifice at Calvary.

Although our celebration of Corpus Christi – literally, the Body of Christ – has these wonderful connections to the world well prior to God's special covenant with the Jewish people, the focus of our feast is on Jesus of Nazareth, who was both faithful Jew and centre-point of our Christian faith. Christians keep this focus on Jesus our High Priest and Saviour alive especially through the prayerful celebration of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist does not just keep alive for us the memory of Christ's actions at the Last Supper and the sacrifice of his earthly body for us but the Eucharist re-enacts the reality of God's saving presence among us in the here-and-now. In a particular way, the Eucharist is linked to the Exodus-event of Israel's liberation from slavery by the Egyptians. God continues to shelter us from all life's trials and tribulations and to shower us with gifts for the road ahead.

Pope Francis tells us the Eucharist is "not a prize for the perfect, but nourishment for the weak!" In saying this he is not suggesting we should attend the Eucharist without thoughtfulness, prayer and presence of mind; but he is also reminding all of us that we come to the Eucharist as sinners in search of God's healing grace and mercy.

Pope Francis also provides guidelines for how the Eucharist should make a real difference in our lives and relationships with others – whether rich, poor, young, old, neighbour or stranger. He suggests the Eucharist should lead us to "see the face of Christ" in the poor, sick and marginalised people of our world. The Eucharist is also especially connected to our experience of being "forgiven sinners", empowering us to reach out in forgiveness of others, to heal broken hearts, and to overcome division. The pope notes the Church's very identity and mission flow from the Eucharist enabling us to become "other Christs" through loving service and compassion for others.

The Anglo-Catholic poet TS Eliot says Christ is "the still point of the turning world". It is especially through our celebration of the Eucharist that our distracted, busy, turning worlds are stilled by the overpowering, silent mystery that camouflages the saving, liberating, loving presence of Christ in the broken bread and sweetened wine.

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