

Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

First Reading

I am the living bread which has come down from heaven, says the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Whoever eats me will draw life from me.

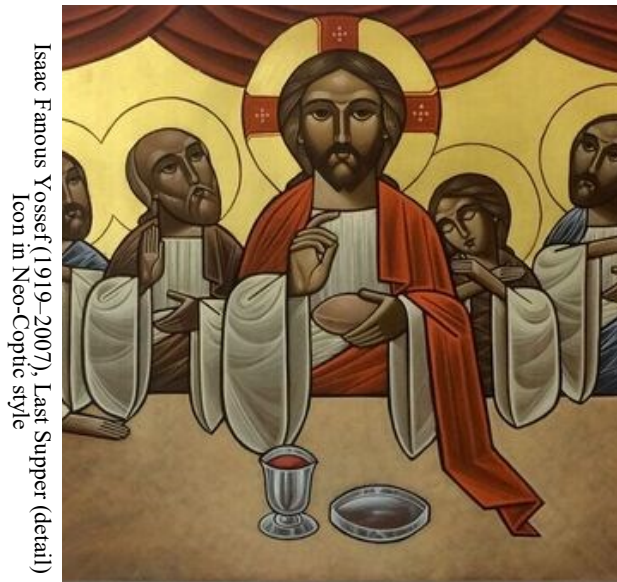
Gospel

Let us pray for the willingness to make present in our world the love of Christ shown to us in the eucharist.

Lord Jesus Christ, we worship you living among us in the sacrament of your body and blood.

Old Opening Prayer (part)

This week's texts if you want to explore further:
Deut. 8: 2-3,14-16; Psalm 147 (148); 1 Cor. 10: 16-17; John 6: 51-58



Isaac Fanous Yossef (1919-2007), Last Supper (detail)
Icon in Neo-Coptic style

'The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in them.'

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
(Corpus Christi)
Year A, 11th June 2023

'The bread we break is a communion with the body of Christ'

Today's feast is an opportunity to reflect on the wonderful mystery of the Eucharist: the sacrament that nourishes our faith and gives life to the world. Each reading offers an opportunity to pray about the significance of this gift, reminding us of the richness of the Eucharistic tradition in the Church.

Moses recalls that though the people of God were hungry and thirsty in the wilderness, God never abandoned them (**First Reading**). Instead, he encouraged them to have faith in his continuing living presence.

The **Psalm** suggests many reasons to praise God, including both the material and spiritual nourishment that God offers us.

Paul reminds the factious Corinthians of the profound spiritual significance of taking the body and blood of Christ. By participating in the Eucharist, they are uniting themselves to Christ and to the whole Christian community. (**Second Reading**)

In the **Gospel**, Jesus affirms that he is the bread of life: the very life force of God. Through his life, death and resurrection, Christ nourishes our deepest hunger for God. We draw life from him even as Jesus drew life from the Father.

This week, we pray for a deepening of Christian Unity. We ask that we may truly become one as followers of Christ.



Opening Prayer

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.

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 10: 16–17

The blessing-cup that we bless
is a communion with the blood of Christ,
and the bread that we break
is a communion with the body of Christ.
The fact that there is only one loaf
means that, though there are many of us,
we form a single body
because we all have a share in this one loaf.

In my time of preparation, I may like to use a favourite prayer of St Ignatius: The Act of the Presence of God. So I begin by acknowledging God's loving attention with me here, now, as he tenderly gazes on me. I ask to become aware of God taking the initiative with me (rather than vice versa) ... drawing me into a right relationship with him. I pray to know myself as a beloved child of the Father.

I 'sun-bathe' in God's gaze upon me for as long as I am drawn.
Then I ask God to nourish me though the scripture.

I read these profound words a number of times, drinking them in.
I ask God to help me pray with a listening, open heart. I pay attention to anything that touches me, mulling it over, letting God guide me.

In silence, I meditate on the meaning of the Eucharist for me.
I allow Christ to reveal himself through his holy word.

Perhaps my time of reflection leads to a deeper response.
I speak from my heart to God, who speaks to me through St Paul's words.

It may be that I find parts of this passage challenging, even distressing.
Paul suggests that '*we form a single body because we all have a share in this one loaf*'. How do I respond to this?

I may think about those excluded from this 'one loaf', where Christ's gift to us has become an issue of separation, even between Christians.

I bring all my thoughts, including any confusion, into Christ's redeeming, reconciling presence.

I ask for God's life-giving grace to foster Christian unity.

I end my prayer with praise and thanks to God.
Our Father ...

Gospel John 6: 51–58

Jesus said to the Jews:
'I am the living bread which has come down from heaven.
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;
and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.'

Then the Jews started arguing with one another:
'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' they said.
Jesus replied: 'I tell you most solemnly,
if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,
you will not have life in you.
Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life,
and I shall raise that person up on the last day.
For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.
Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him. As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will draw life from me.
This is the bread come down from heaven; not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.'

I take a few moments to become comfortable as I prepare for prayer, becoming aware of my breathing. I try to let go of my needs ... of anything that preoccupies me. I ask God for the grace of an expectant, open heart, receptive to whatever he offers.

When ready, I read Jesus's words, slowly and gently. There is no need to rush. If a particular phrase draws me, I linger with it, savouring the words.

Jesus speaks to me here about the great mystery of the Eucharist; how he gives of himself totally for the life of the whole world. I may imagine this Cosmic Christ animating all of creation, from the smallest elements to the vast universe. I ask God to help me wake up to this life-giving power.

Perhaps I find myself filled with awe and wonder, and allow that to nourish me. I pray to draw life from Christ as he drew life from the Father.

I may speak to the Lord about what has arisen in my prayer, or I may simply sit in silence, basking in the love of the Trinity.

I end with a slow blessing: of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.