

Thursday 15th June 2017

Corpus Christi

White



Collect

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you that in this wonderful sacrament you have given us the memorial of your passion: grant us so to reverence the sacred mysteries of your body and blood that we may know within ourselves and show forth in our lives the fruits of your redemption; for you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 English Standard Version (ESV)

11 ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for^[a] you. Do this in remembrance of me.”^[b] ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Footnotes: a. Some manuscripts *broken for* b. or *as my memorial*; also verse 25.

COMMENT: This recorded statement about the institution of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper differs a little from the reports in the gospels, yet shares the same outline. It was written at least 10 years before the first Gospel. Paul’s puts emphasis on the memorial aspect of the elements and the action while the gospels make an eschatological emphasis related to the coming of the kingdom. For Paul too, the celebration brings us into direct relationship with the risen Christ.

John 6:51-58 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Bread of Life

⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” ⁵² The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” ⁵³ So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread^[a] the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”

Footnote: a. Greek lacks *the bread*.

COMMENT: The controversy with the Jews continued as they protested Jesus’ claim that they eat his flesh and drink his blood to gain eternal life. John told the story as an eyewitness. From his narrative, one can see the Jews arguing among themselves (verse 52). Jesus stood aside from the fray letting them have their dispute. By saying that Jesus’ flesh and blood are true food and drink, John echoed the frequent and by then formalised sacramental remembrance of the death and resurrection of Christ and his continuing presence in the church. This long discourse not only revealed how opposition to Jesus developed during his ministry in Galilee, but also showed that he challenged their traditional ways of thinking about how God is revealed. When John composed his gospel, the church had recognised both its continuity and discontinuity with the Jewish tradition. However, strange that may seem to us, John was telling his audience that Jesus had given himself as a sacrifice for all. His body broken and his blood shed on the cross were now represented in the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper. He was not only with them, he was in them. Because they had shared in this feast of his body and blood at which he was the host, they would be with him, they in him and he in them eternally.

Psalm 116:1,10-17 *Dilexi, quoniam* Grail Psalter

℟ How can I repay the Lord for his goodness to me?

Alleluia!

¹ I love the Lord for he has heard
the cry of my appeal;

² for he turned his ear to me
in the day when I called him. ℟

¹⁰ I trusted, even when I said:
“I am sorely afflicted,”

¹¹ and when I said in my alarm:
“No man can be trusted.” ℟

¹² How can I repay the Lord
for his goodness to me?

¹³ The cup of salvation I will raise;
I will call on the Lord's name. ℟

¹⁴ My vows to the Lord I will fulfil
before all his people.

¹⁵ O precious in the eyes of the Lord
is the death of his faithful. ℟

¹⁶ Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;
you have loosened my bonds.

¹⁷ A thanksgiving sacrifice I make;
I will call on the Lord's name. ℟

¹⁸ My vows to the Lord I will fulfil
before all his people,

¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the Lord,
in your midst, O Jerusalem. ℟

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: This hymn of thanksgiving most likely accompanied a thank-offering sacrifice by an individual on recovery from a serious illness. It would appear to have been designed for ritual use in the temple in the presence of a congregation.

Post Communion

All praise be to thee, our God and Father, for that thou hast fed us with the bread of heaven and hast quenched our thirst from the true vine: grant that we, being grafted into Christ, may grow together in unity and be partakers of his heavenly feast; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love, defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**