**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for Sunday, June 6, 2021**

**The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ**

*I am the living bread that came down from heaven,
says the Lord;
whoever eats this bread will live forever.* [*Jn 6:51*](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/john/6?51)

**HELLOs** and then Betty mutes everyone. **(Betty or Suzie)**

**Welcome**, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to Alicia and George Urban who prepared this communal prayer.
* Thanks to  Linda Donaldson for our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Paula Lake, Gob Gallagher, Anne LoPiano, Kate Finan, Anne Regan, Mia Brown, Linda Donaldson, Dan McCarthy, Karen McCarthy.

**SETTLING IN (Alicia Urban)**

Let your breath bring you into quiet so you can be attentive to each other and to the Spirit.  Please close your eyes and take a deep breath to be with Christ and each other. Be still and fall into  Psalm 140:10.

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I AM.

Be still and know.

**BE**

PAUSE

Now as we celebrate the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, let us join in the song, One Bread, One Body:

**O PENING  – One Bread, One Body.    (Betty –** Jonathan Cordoua Virtual Choir to 3:00

https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifSFQYTWOyM )

One bread, one body, one Lord of all, one cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many, throughout the earth, we are one body in this one Lord.

Gentile or Jew, servant or free, woman or man no more.
One bread, one body, one Lord of all, one cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many, throughout the earth, we are one body in this one Lord.

Many the gifts, many the works, one in the Lord of all.
One bread, one body, one Lord of all, one cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many, throughout the earth, we are one body in this one Lord.

(John Foley; I Corinthians 10:16; 17, 12:4, Galatians 3:28)

**GREETING  (Susan DeQuatro)**

Beloved Community, rejoice!The Spirit of Christ is alive in us!  Alleluia!  Alleluia!

**All:** Thanks be to God!  Alleluia!  Alleluia!

**CALL TO WORSHIP  (Kate Finan)**

Christ has risen! The Spirit is among and within us!  The Body and Blood of Christ nourishes us.  “We are called to love one another, to act justly and walk humbly with our God.”  Let us continue to journey together as we joyfully celebrate this feast of The Body of Christ.

**GATHERING PRAYER (Kate Finan)**

Using the beautiful words of the ancient sequence composed for this feast day, let us name with joy the source of our healing and our hope:

*Sing of love beyond your telling,*

*love from Jesus’ heart upwelling,*

*giving all*

*that love can give.*

*See him as his life is ending,*

*to his chosen friends attending,*

*giving all*

*that all might live.*

*Greet your Lord with acclamation,*

*sing with joy in celebration*

*of his gift*

*of living bread.*

*Let your mind with love be dwelling*

*on this gift, all gifts excelling,*

*gift by which*

*your heart is fed.*

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME  (Alicia)**

Today we recommit to the new covenant given to us in the body and blood of Christ.  We ask ourselves how our lives are fueled by one lifeblood flowing through the one body of humanity.

 The reading from Exodus describes a majestic, identity-forging scene in which the people who had followed Moses out of slavery solemnly committed themselves to the covenant God offered them. Twice, everybody — men, women and children — cried with one voice, "We will do everything that the LORD has told us."

Just imagine trying to get a group of U.S. citizens — or Catholics — to say that! It's not so much accepting God's law that would be the rub; the difficulty would be in getting all of them to agree to one answer. Some would say "Yes!" Others would ask, "What are the legal and financial ramifications?" Others would say, "*I* will do it, but I refuse to be judged by how others comply!"

Jesus and his Hebrew ancestors shared a culture very different from our own. They were "collectivists," people who learn from infancy that membership in your group creates your identity and that everyone's well-being depends on group cohesion. The accomplishments of your great leaders like Moses and Jesus, as well as the reputation of your family or tribe, are the source of your honor because you are identified with them.

When it came to the preparations for Jesus' last Passover with his disciples, Mark reflects subtly on the relationship between leader and followers. With careful detail, Mark describes how some disciples asked Jesus, "Where do you want us … to prepare *for you* to eat the Passover?" In response, Jesus told them where they would share the meal *together.* Jesus was planning for a shared celebration of commitment, not a moment when they would see him act the hero. Emphasizing that point, when Jesus passed the cup at the supper, Mark tells us that they "all drank from it" even before he explained what it symbolized. Jesus wanted them to realize that being identified with him implied imitating him.

The bread Jesus offered as his own self and the cup of the new covenant invited the disciples to be in communion with the essence of his life, death and resurrection. Their participation in bread and cup were a pledge to be faithful and to do as he did. Like their ancestors who promised to do everything God asked, like the people of God throughout the ages, they failed almost immediately. But, because God is who God is, no failure is definitive.

Most of the disciples who communed at the supper failed, but were not lost. Some women from that company remained near Jesus as he died on the cross. They were then the first to discover and proclaim his resurrection. Others of the group slowly but surely came to comprehend, to live, and to preach the new covenant. Through their communion with Christ, the disciples became, as St. Paul teaches, the Body of Christ extended through time.

*(Slight pause)*

Now   Anne LoPiano will read from Exodus, followed by reflective questions and 2 minutes of silence for reflection.  Stay with whatever calls you.  Remember: try to share what you *feel* rather than what you *think or we do*.

**READING 1** [**Ex 24:3-8**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/exodus/24?3) **(Anne LoPiano)**

When Moses came to the people
and related all the words and ordinances of the LORD,
they all answered with one voice,
"We will do everything that the LORD has told us."
Moses then wrote down all the words of the LORD and,
rising early the next day,
he erected at the foot of the mountain an altar
and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.
Then, having sent certain young men of the Israelites
to offer holocausts and sacrifice young bulls
as peace offerings to the LORD,
Moses took half of the blood and put it in large bowls;
the other half he splashed on the altar.
Taking the book of the covenant, he read it aloud to the people,
who answered, "All that the LORD has said, we will heed and do."
Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying,
"This is the blood of the covenant
that the LORD has made with you
in accordance with all these words of his."

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Bill Fanelli)**

*(Pause between questions.)*

Imagine that you are standing in the crowd as sacrificial blood is gathered and all the teachings and requirements of the covenant are being proclaimed.  How do you react?

The church today uses rituals to emphasize the presence of Christ among us. Do any of these rituals draw you into worship?  What happens within you?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**   **(Betty:** Share slide w/questions, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

Alicia:  Now Bob Gallagher will read from the end of the Gospel of Mark.

**READING 2** [**Mk 14:12-16, 22-26**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/mark/14?12) **(Bob Gallagher)**

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread,
when they sacrificed the Passover lamb,
Jesus’ disciples said to him,
"Where do you want us to go
and prepare for you to eat the Passover?"
He sent two of his disciples and said to them,
"Go into the city and a man will meet you,
carrying a jar of water.
Follow him.
Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house,
'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room
where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"'
Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready.
Make the preparations for us there."
The disciples then went off, entered the city,
and found it just as he had told them;
and they prepared the Passover.
While they were eating,
he took bread, said the blessing,
broke it, gave it to them, and said,
"Take it; this is my body."
Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them,
and they all drank from it.
He said to them,
"This is my blood of the covenant,
which will be shed for many.
Amen, I say to you,
I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine
until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."
Then, after singing a hymn,
they went out to the Mount of Olives.

*(Slight pause)*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 2 (Bill Fanelli)**

*(Pause between questions.)*

Imagine that you are at the table when Jesus tells his followers to take the unleavened bread and says, “Take it; this is my body.”

How are you affected by his saying, “I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”  ……… As you hear his words, how do you respond inwardly regarding God’s kingdom being *already here* and still *not yet complete*?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**   **(Betty or Other:** Share slide w/questions, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

Alicia:  Now George and I will share a reflection drawn from Catholic Women Speak:

**READING 3 (George and Alicia Urban)**

First reader (George)

     This is my body, which is given for you.

     This is my blood poured out for you.

What does it mean for us to take into ourselves the body and blood that make us one, the lifeblood that heals all that divides us?   As the living body of Christ, how can we take in the violence in our hearts and in our world so that it becomes fuel for us building the kingdom?

Daily we hear headlines of theviolence rampant across the globe. Stories of bodies broken, and blood spilled.  Families shattered, communities torn apart.  The numbers stagger us.  One example:  more than 20,000 died just from gun violence in the US in 2020, and 2021 is expected to be worse.

Many of us, feeling fearful and helpless, persuade ourselves that this violence has nothing to do with us. We imagine that the violence is out there, in those people.  When we do that, we fracture the world into camps of the righteous and the evildoers.  And perhaps more importantly we hide from the fact that our divisive thoughts fracture our own hearts.   From our fractured hearts come words and actions that negatethe humanity of some, and that project our own suffering or rage onto whole groups of others.  A vivid example: Think of the words and emotions you observed after the trial and verdict of Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd.

Second Reader (Alicia)

     This is my body, which is given for you.

     This is my blood poured out for you.

Exodus tells us that blood demonstrates the people’s commitment to an eternal covenant relationship with God. The blood poured out on the people and the altar make their unity visible.  It signifies the lifeblood of their communion. They are one.

On the night before Jesus’ unjust and violent death, he freely gave his body and blood for all.  Accepting his gift commits us to knowing that we are one body.  Our faith is incarnate, lived out in our physical bodies.  There is one lifeblood that ﬂows through the veins of every human person:

    The bodies broken daily by violence are our bodies; it is our blood spilled out.
    The enraged, or perhaps cold, blood that ﬂows through the veins of the perpetrators of violence, is pumped by our hearts as well.

Ponder those words as you receive healing and nourishment in the body and blood of Christ.

First Reader (George)

       This is my body, which is given for you
       This my blood, poured out for you – **and for all.**

What might be the result if we choose daily to ***practice***this act of love?  Could it be that through each of us, in our small ways, God’s healing and transformation of violence may spread?

Let us pray every headline and every statistic with these words: This is **my** body, this is **my** blood.

As we see the faces in communities locked in opposition to one another. . . As the news brings to our eyes the faces of the victims, *and*the faces of the perpetrators, Let us pray:

     This is my body; this is my blood. **We are one.**

*(Slight pause)*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 3 (Bill Fanelli)**

*(Pause between questions.)*

How does Jesus’ gift of his body heal you?

How does your physical body help you – or hold you back – in being fully part of the body of Christ?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**    **(Betty:** Share slide w/questions, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

Alicia:  Anne Regan will now lead our sharing.

**SHARING  (Anne Regan)**

We invite you to briefly share what emerged in **your** heart as you listened and as you reflected on these readings and how they help us to glimpse the many ways God is among us.  We welcome new voices, and we also know that the wisdom of this community includes both words shared and silent listening.  If possible let those of us who shared first last week wait several minutes so others might feel invited to speak.

As you share your feelings, please try to use "I” or “me".  Also, let us leave a deep breath of silence between each speaker.   A bridge of silence allows us to take in what was just said and let it influence what we may want to share.

So let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections.  [Long pause.]

Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute again afterwards.

Who would like to begin our sharing?

Thank you.

Now    Mia Brown will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Mia Brown)**

We know that God alone is enough for us.  At the same time, as Paul has written “if there is anything you need, pray for it.”  So now we bring what is in our hearts to God.  Our response is:  Bread of Life, hear our prayer.

As we celebrate this solemn feast of Corpus Christi, may we follow to the actions of Christ’s love.       Bread of Life, hear our prayer.

God among us, animate the Leadership Conference of Women Religious as they ask not simply what they are to do for your kingdom, but how they are to be your love.

Bread of Life, hear our prayer.

Now let’s remember the feelings and prayers that arose in us as we shared reflections, and also the prayers we carry with us.  *[Pause.]*

Now, for what else shall we pray?  Please remember to unmute and mute yourself afterwards.

(People speak.)

Thank you.

O God, we give you all our prayers, spoken and unspoken.  We will do all that we can to put our prayers into action – while entrusting the outcome to you.  Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Karen McCarty)**

In this season after Pentecost, we celebrate the amazing fact that the Spirit of God lives in us now and at every moment. God is in love with us!  What does it mean to offer yourself to God in gratitude?  Is there an old or new call that you will commit to this week?  *[Pause.]*

Let us pray. Precious Body and Blood of Christ, we commit to sharing our time, talents, and treasures so that we may be your body here and now. As Teresa of Avila wrote: “Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours.  Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.  Christ has no body now on earth but yours.” Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION  (Dan McCarthy)**

O Great Love, we are humbled and emboldened

to know that you trust us to be your body in this world.

We are part of that body as we let go of all that separates us from you,

and as we embrace one another and your entire creation with merciful love.

We give you thanks for your presence in and among us.  [Pause.]

We remember the night before Jesus died.

At dinner with friends, Jesus knew all that would soon be asked of them,

and, loving them to the end, Jesus showed them how to care for each other

as they went out into the world.

First Jesus washed their feet

and said, “… as I have done for you, you should also do.”

Then he looked at what was in front of them, the bread and the cup,

gifts of the earth and work of human hands, and blessed them.

So let us, too, invite God right now into what is front and center in our lives

knowing that God will indeed enter what we offer – and bless it.  [Pause.]

Let us invite God into ourselves so that we become God’s living presence in our world.  [Pause.]

Holy One, you transform us as you nourish us here.

May we nourish others with your presence.

Amen.

**OUR FATHER                                            (Paula Lake)**

Now let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands to pray in harmony with Christians throughout the world in the words that Jesus gave us:

***All (muted):*** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.  Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,

and do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil

for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.  Amen.

**FINAL BLESSING (Linda Donaldson)**

Broken, we have gathered.  Nourished, we reach out.

Now let us now go forth in peace:

in communion with each other

and offering communion to a hungry world.  Amen.

Now, let us conclude with song Let Us Be Bread:

**CLOSING  – “Let Us Be Bread” by Thomas J. Porter (Linda Donaldson)**

Refrain: Let us be bread, blessed by the Lord,

 Broken and shared, life for the world.

 Let us be wine, love freely poured.

 Let us be one in the Lord!

1. I am the bread of life, broken for all.

Eat now and hunger no more! Refrain

1. You are my friends if you keep my commands,

No longer servants but friends. Refrain

1. See how my people have nothing to eat.

Give them the bread that is you. Refrain

1. As God has loved me, so I have loved you.

Go and live on in my love. Refrain

**RESOURCES**

* “One Bread, One Body” by John Foley, performed by the Jonathan Cordoua Vitual Choir March 29, 2020 **-** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifSFQYTWOyM>
* Ps 140:10  Be still and know that I AM God
* We are called to love one another, to act justly and walk humbly with our God.        (Micah 6:8)
* St. Teresa of Avila:  “Christ has no body now, but yours….”
* Celeste D. Mueller, D. Min., homily for the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ 2021 at Catholic Women Preach - <https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/06062021>
* USCCB Sunday readings - <https://bible.usccb.org/readings/calendar>