

# How Holy this Feast The Eucharist & Social Action

Welcome

## Opening Response

*How holy this feast*  
in which Christ is our food:  
his passion is recalled,  
grace fills our hearts,  
and we receive a pledge of the glory to come.

## Introduction

To receive the Eucharist and to contemplate the Blessed Sacrament not only nourishes us and strengthens our faith but also makes demands on how we should live and how we should see the world.

## Listen to Scripture

### Reading

Luke 14: 1, 7-16

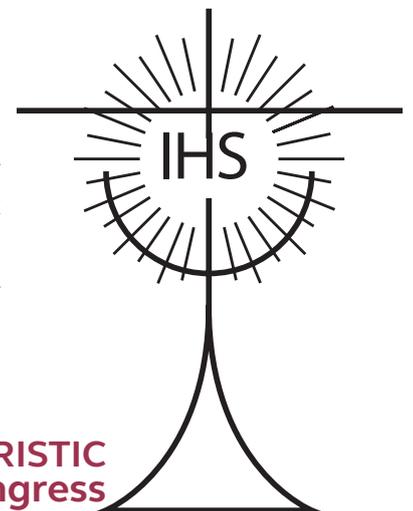
One Sabbath, when Jesus went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully.

Jesus told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honour, saying to them, “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honour, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

### Reflection 1

- In what ways does the celebration of Sunday Mass and/or Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament proclaim values which contradict the values of the society?
  - *or* What are the values we experience at Sunday Mass and/or Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament?
  - How might these contradict the values of society?



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# Read with the Church

## Documents

from the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI *Sacramentum Caritatis*

“The bread I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51). In these words the Lord reveals the true meaning of the gift of his life for all people. These words also reveal his deep compassion for every man and woman. The Gospels frequently speak of Jesus’ feelings towards others, especially the suffering and sinners (cf. Mt 20:34; Mk 6:34; Lk 19:41). Through a profoundly human sensibility he expresses God’s saving will for all people – that they may have true life. Each celebration of the Eucharist makes sacramentally present the gift that the crucified Lord made of his life, for us and for the whole world. In the Eucharist Jesus also makes us witnesses of God’s compassion towards all our brothers and sisters. The eucharistic mystery thus gives rise to a service of charity towards neighbour, which “consists in the very fact that, in God and with God, I love even the person whom I do not like or even know. This can only take place on the basis of an intimate encounter with God, an encounter which has become a communion of will, affecting even my feelings. Then I learn to look on this other person not simply with my eyes and my feelings, but from the perspective of Jesus Christ.” In all those I meet, I recognize brothers or sisters for whom the Lord gave his life, loving them “to the end” (Jn 13:1). Our communities, when they celebrate the Eucharist, must become ever more conscious that the sacrifice of Christ is for all, and that the Eucharist thus compels all who believe in him to become “bread that is broken” for others, and to work for the building of a more just and fraternal world. Keeping in mind the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, we need to realize that Christ continues today to exhort his disciples to become personally engaged: “You yourselves, give them something to eat” (Mt 14:16). Each of us is truly called, together with Jesus, to be bread broken for the life of the world. †

The relationship between the eucharistic mystery and social commitment must be made explicit. In the memorial of his sacrifice, the Lord strengthens our fraternal communion and, in a particular way, urges those in conflict to hasten their reconciliation by opening themselves to dialogue and a commitment to justice. Certainly, the restoration of justice, reconciliation and forgiveness are the conditions for building true peace. The recognition of this fact leads to a determination to transform unjust structures and to restore respect for the dignity of all men and women, created in God’s image and likeness. Through the concrete fulfilment of this responsibility, the Eucharist becomes in life what it signifies in its celebration.

Precisely because of the mystery we celebrate, we must denounce situations contrary to human dignity, since Christ shed his blood for all, and at the same time affirm the inestimable value of each individual person. [cf. 88–89]

## Reflection 2

- Who are the ‘neighbours’ of the parish? *or* In the local community who is in need?
- What injustices affect them? *or* What are their needs?
- What bread do we have to offer our neighbour?

## Preparation

Think about what you and the parish have to offer to others?

*You may be invited to share these (as much or as little as you wish) with the group or you may wish to keep them to yourself.*

# Prayer

From a homily of St John Chrysostom

Would you honour the body of Christ? Do not despise his nakedness; do not honour him here in church clothed in silk vestments and then pass him by unclothed and frozen outside. Remember that he who said, 'This is my body', and made good his words, also said, 'You saw me hungry and gave me no food', and, 'in so far as you did it not to one of these, you did it not to me'. In the first sense the body of Christ does not need clothing but worship from a pure heart. In the second sense it does need clothing and all the care we can give it.

We must learn to be discerning Christians and to honour Christ in the way in which he wants to be honoured. It is only right that honour given to anyone should take the form most acceptable to the recipient not to the giver. Peter thought he was honouring the Lord when he tried to stop him washing his feet, but this was far from being genuine homage. So give God the honour he asks for, that is give your money generously to the poor. God has no need of golden vessels but of golden hearts.

I am not saying you should not give golden altar vessels and so on, but I am insisting that nothing can take the place of almsgiving. The Lord will not refuse to accept the first kind of gift but he prefers the second, and quite naturally, because in the first case only the donor benefits, in the second case the poor get the benefit. The gift of a chalice may be ostentatious; almsgiving is pure benevolence.

What is the use of loading Christ's table with gold cups while he himself is starving? Feed the hungry and then if you have any money left over, spend it on the altar table. Will you make a cup of gold and withhold a cup of water? What use is it to adorn the altar with cloth of gold hangings and deny Christ a coat for his back! What would that profit you? Tell me: if you saw someone starving and refused to give him any food but instead spent your money on adorning the altar with gold, would he thank you? Would he not rather be outraged? Or if you saw someone in rags and stiff with cold and then did not give him clothing but set up golden columns in his honour, would he not say he was being made a fool of and insulted?

from Divine Office Week 21: Saturday *From the homilies of St John Chrysostom* Hom 50, 3 - 4

## Further ideas

Caritas Social Action Network is the agency established by the bishops to support initiatives in England and Wales where every person can flourish in their families and communities, living with peace and human dignity. Many dioceses now have a Caritas network bring together different agencies and charities working in a local area.

- <http://www.csan.org.uk>

# Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament

## Exposition

### Song

*Possible themes include: the Eucharist, Jesus' Life and Ministry, Discipleship and Justice and Peace.*

*Suggested titles:*

- For the healing of the nations
- Praise to you, O Christ our Saviour

## Adoration

### Reading

- Repeat the Scripture reading (Luke 14: 1, 7–16).
- An alternative text would be to repeat one of the readings from preceding Sunday.

### Song

- The reading could be followed by the singing of a simple chant
  - Happy are those who are invited (Russian)
  - He became poor (Bell)

### Prayer

- After a period of silence the passage from St John Chrysostom.

### Silence

## Benediction

### Eucharistic Song

- Bread for the world (Farrell)
- Lord Jesus Christ
- Ubi Caritas (Hurd)

### Prayer.

*The following is suggested from the Rite:*

Lord our God,

in this great sacrament

we come into the presence of Jesus Christ, your Son,

born of the Virgin Mary

and crucified for our salvation.

May we who declare our faith in this fountain of love and mercy

drink from it the water of everlasting life.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

## Reposition

Acclamation *See Notes*

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