

5. Communion

Our sharing in the gifts of Christ's Body and Blood deepens us in communion.

The Body of Christ. Amen.
The Blood of Christ. Amen.

Listen to Scripture

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognising him.

And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.”

Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all

the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”

That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Luke 24: 13–35

Our Experience

- What is it like to share your story with someone?
- What is it like to share a meal with someone?

Read & Reflect

CELEBRATING THE MASS

Communion Rite

200 The eating and drinking together of the Lord's Body and Blood in a Paschal meal is the culmination of the Eucharist. The assembly is made ready to share in this banquet by a series of rites that lead from the Eucharistic Prayer directly to the Communion. The themes underlying these rites are the mutual love and reconciliation that are both the condition and the fruit of worthy communion and the unity of the many in the one. These themes are symbolised at both the natural and the sacramental level in the signs of bread and wine now become the Body and Blood of Christ.

- Though each of these rites (the Lord's Prayer, Sign of Peace, Breaking of the Bread) is important in itself, in the context of the whole celebration they constitute together a transition from one high point, the Eucharistic Prayer, to another, the sharing in Communion...

Breaking of the Bread (Fraction)

205 This characteristic action of Christ at the feeding of the multitude, at the Last Supper, and at his meals with the disciples after his resurrection was so central to the Eucharist that it seems to have given its name to the entire celebration in the days of the Apostles. The natural, the practical, the symbolic, and the spiritual are all inextricably linked in this most powerful symbol. Just as many grains of wheat are ground, kneaded, and baked together to become one loaf, which is then broken and shared out among many to bring them into one table-fellowship, so those gathered are made one body in the one bread of life which is Christ (see 1 Corinthians 10:17).

206 In order for the meaning of this symbolism to be perceived, both the bread and the breaking must be truly authentic and recognisable. The eucharistic Bread is to "have the appearance of food" and is to be

made so that it is able to be broken and distributed to at least some of the members of the assembly...

Distribution of Communion

209 Faithful to the Lord's command to his disciples to "Take and eat," "Take and drink," the assembly completes the Eucharistic action by together eating and drinking the elements consecrated during the celebration. It is most desirable that the faithful share the chalice. Drinking at the Eucharist is a sharing in the sign of the new covenant (see Luke 22:20), a foretaste of the heavenly banquet (see Matthew 26:29), a sign of participation in the suffering Christ (see Mark 10:38-39).

210 The Communion procession expresses the humble patience of the poor moving forward to be fed, the alert expectancy of God's people sharing the Paschal meal in readiness for their journey, the joyful confidence of God's people on the march toward the promised land. In England and Wales it is through this action of walking solemnly in procession that the faithful make their sign of reverence in preparation for receiving Communion.

For Discussion

- How does the Breaking of Bread reveal Christ?
- In what ways do we express unity with Christ and with each other in the Communion Rite?
- What helps/hinders our celebration of Communion?

Act

- See whether your journal notes on the Sunday scriptures help you to recognise Christ's presence in your daily living.
- Where have you had the opportunity to be Christ for others?

Prayer

The whole community devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Acts 2: 42–47

We thank you, Father,
for the holy vine of David, your servant,
which you have revealed through Jesus, your Son.

Praise to you now and evermore!

We thank you, Father,
for the life and the knowledge
that you have revealed through Jesus, your Son.

Praise to you now and evermore!

Just as this bread that we break
was once distributed on a hillside
and its fragments gathered so as not to lose any,
so let your Church be gathered
from the farthest parts of the earth into your Kingdom.

Praise to you now and evermore!

Because yours are the glory and the power forever.

Praise to you now and evermore!

We thank you, holy Father,
for your holy name that dwells in our hearts.

Praise to you now and evermore!

For the knowledge, the faith, and the immortality
that you have revealed to us through Jesus, your Son.

Praise to you now and evermore!

It is you, all-powerful Master, who created the universe
in praise of your name.

Praise to you now and evermore!

To all you give food and drink;
but to us you give the grace of a spiritual food,
of a drink for eternal life through Jesus, your Son.

Praise to you now and evermore!

Above all, we thank you for your power.

Praise to you now and evermore!

Remember, Lord, your Church,
deliver it from every evil,
and make it perfect in your love.

Praise to you now and evermore!

Gather together from the four winds
this sanctified Church
into the kingdom that you have prepared.

Praise to you now and evermore!

Come, Lord, and let this world pass!

Amen.

Hosanna to the house of David!

Amen.

Let him who is holy come!

Amen.

Let him who is not, repent!

Amen.

Maranatha — Come, Lord!

Amen.

Lucien Deiss
based on the Didache

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