

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) He fed them with the finest wheat and satisfied them with honey from the rock.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 115)

ANTIPHON: I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord.

RESPONSE: I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord.

LECTOR: How can I repay the Lord for his goodness to me? The cup of salvation I will raise; I will call on the Lord's name. **R.**

LECTOR: O precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful. Your servant, Lord, your servant am I; you have loosened my bonds. **R.**

LECTOR: A thanksgiving sacrifice I make: I will call on the Lord's name. My vows to the Lord I will fulfil before all his people. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! I am the living bread from heaven, says the Lord; whoever eats this bread will live for ever. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.

TODAY'S READINGS Exodus 24: 3-8; Hebrews 9: 11-15; Mark 14: 12-16, 22-26

NEXT WEEK (10th Sunday, Year B) Genesis 3:9-15; Ps 129; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35

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Eucharist is the 'summit' of Christian life



2 June 2024 Body and Blood of Christ Year B

In the gospel, Jesus asks his disciples to prepare for the Passover, a Jewish feast celebrating the Hebrew's liberation from slavery in Egypt which is also known as Pesach which means "to pass over," commemorating the fact that God spared the Jewish firstborn from the final plague.

Pharaoh's resistance was broken, and he virtually chased his former slaves out of the land. The Israelites left in such a hurry, that the bread they baked as provisions for the way did not have time to rise, so it is also known as the feast of Unleavened Bread. Six hundred thousand adult males, plus many women and children, left Egypt on that day and began the trek to Mount Sinai and their birth as God's chosen people.

The tradition is that a family has a special meal called the seder to commemorate this critical event. Foods of symbolic significance commemorating their liberation are eaten, prayers and the reading of the Exodus story are part of the seder meal. Passover is a time of great rejoicing, but strict dietary laws must be observed, and special prohibitions restrict work at the beginning and end of the celebration.

Jesus, as an observant Jew, asked his disciples to prepare a room for this special occasion. However, as Mark tells us there is something different when Jesus, on the eve of his execution on Calvary, gives to his disciples the gift of himself in the form of bread and wine as his body and blood. Building on the Jewish-Christian tradition we have, over the

centuries, developed the eucharist as a liturgy of thanksgiving for what God has and is doing for us.

In November 1964, Vatican Council II in its Constitution on the Church declared the eucharist as the "source and summit of the Christian life." Long before this declaration Catholic Christians celebrated the eucharist as their participation in the life of Christ who calls us to communion (relationship) with God and mission which means outreach to those in our world who are in need and those who have not heard the good news.

The eucharist is a source of nourishment and renewal. When we gather to celebrate eucharist we are reminded of the need to recall the Jewish origins of Catholic and Christian life and to remember that we are called to community and to mission. The first calls us into relationship with God and one another and the second reminds us that we do not exist for ourselves but for the mission proclaimed by Jesus which is to make a difference in our world as we share in his mission for the realisation of the kingdom of God.

We cannot create the kingdom, but we can contribute to its realisation. Our regular participation in the eucharist nourishes and strengthens us as a community and continually encourages us to go beyond the doors of our local community to make a difference in our world.

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