

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Corpus Christi

Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14B-16A

Psalm 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

John 6:51-58

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It sometimes feels like we are living in dark, difficult times in the United States. Terrorism, war, strange new diseases, and economic uncertainty threaten. It seems like we can't take anything for granted anymore. Our institutions have let us down. The very Church to which we instinctively turn for solace has been wracked by sexual scandals that fill us with revulsion and threaten to undermine our trust. The problems that beset us as a people also afflict us as individuals. Many live from paycheck to paycheck and fear that the paychecks will stop. Young people leave college burdened by crushing debt. Families fear for loved ones serving overseas. Some are awakened by a stab of fear every time a siren sounds in the night. Others find it hard to sleep at all. And there is always the awful knowledge that however bleak our own circumstances, three quarters of the people in the world are worse off than we are.

In the midst of all this, it can feel like we are wandering in a desert, and we can be tempted to lose hope. Thankfully, ours is a God who knows something about deserts and the temptations to be found there. We may be between a rock and a hard place, but we are children of a God who brings honey out of rock.

So we *have* hope. We know God loves us. We know that by his Passion, death, and Resurrection Jesus Christ has defeated sin and death and restored to

us the promise of eternal life. We know these things, but we long to feel them. As creatures of flesh and blood, we hunger and thirst for our loving God. We yearn to experience the presence of our Savior in our life and in our world. We want to hold our hope in our hands. And our God, who has felt human need from the inside, gives us what we long for.

Today is the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ. Today we give thanks for the Sacrament that lets us feel within ourselves the fruit of our redemption. We celebrate the fact that the God who gave the chosen people manna in the desert has given us bread that came down from heaven – his very flesh for the life of the world. When we eat this bread and drink this cup we experience a union with Jesus that strengthens us for whatever we must face when we walk out the doors of our churches, just as it has strengthened Christians from the beginning. The last sentence of today’s Gospel reminds us what happened immediately after the first Eucharist. Mark writes, “Then after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.” By the grace of this Blessed Sacrament, when we have sung our last hymn at Mass this morning, we will go out into the world in union with the same Jesus who walked with those first disciples. We will go out strengthened, consoled, and confirmed in our conviction that we possess in Christ a light no darkness can overcome.