

# The Body and Blood of Christ



Consider the congregation at liturgy on a given Sunday.  
Here is a woman who comes early and enters by the side door that offers a ramp  
for her invalid husband's wheelchair.  
There is the father of four whose wife  
was recently diagnosed with cancer.  
A young couple sitting at the back are mourning the death of their baby daughter  
and the mother on the aisle is weeping for her son who was arrested in a drug raid  
... It is well to remember that while we attend the liturgy to praise God, we are  
also there to support one another by our prayers, our presence, and our care,  
Together we are the body of Christ, a suffering body  
that can rise to the challenges of life through  
the ministry of its members-the love and care for one another.  
Carmelites of Indianapolis, *Hidden Friends*.

This little reflection reminds us of how important it is for us to occupy the space  
we are in each Sunday at Mass in a new and profound way.  
To be present to each person around us.  
To be attentive to what happens, attentive to each word and action.  
To heighten our awareness, that when we gather as a community to celebrate the  
Eucharist we are gathering not to "do," we are gathering to "be with others."  
In our communion with one another  
the Risen Lord is truly present in our midst.

Last Sunday, on the RTE Mass at 11 am, the Celebrant told a moving story  
of a little girl with Special Needs.  
For many weeks, the SNA was preparing the little girl  
for her First Communion.  
When the morning of the First Communion arrived  
the SNA was a little nervous of what might happen.  
She was concerned that the little girl might refuse  
to leave her seat.  
To her surprise the little girl, without any hesitation, went straight up to the  
Celebrant and when she received the Host, she held it in her hand for a moment,  
then she broke it and gave one half to her SNA.

This beautiful action of the little girl expresses the essence  
of what Jesus did at the Last Supper.  
Jesus broke the bread and shared it.  
This action of Jesus was the most supreme act of love and tenderness  
that has ever been made.

He completely gave his human will to the Father and his life for each one of us.

After breaking the bread, he gave it to his disciples, saying:  
*“Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my body which will be given up for you.”* Then when supper was ended, he took the cup of wine, and gave to the disciple, saying: *“Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.”*

The word “body” indicates that Jesus left us the gift of his whole life, from the first moment of the incarnation to the very end, including all that made up his life: family, friends, prayer, ministry, struggles, suffering, joy and his final humiliation and death.

We see a life lived in loving acceptance of those who were rejected, outcast, marginalised, weak, and vulnerable. In that acceptance we see the love and healing that Jesus gave to all whom he encountered.

The word “blood” reminds that having given us his life, he now gives us the most precious part - his death.

The Eucharist is the mystery of the Body and Blood of Jesus,  
that is of the life and death of Jesus.

At every Eucharist, we offer *our* body and blood with Jesus.

We offer what Jesus offered: our life and death.

By “body” we offer all that is part of our physical life: our time, energy, work, health, talents, a simple smile, every act of kindness and love.

By “blood” we express the offering of our death. Not necessarily our final death, but all the dying’s in our daily living, sickness, anxiety, failures, misunderstanding in our relationships, humiliations, everything that causes us to die a little.

Taking part in Communion and consuming the Eucharistic Bread  
Jesus dwells within us and we become one body with him.

We enter, into communion with all those gathered  
and with all those who celebrate Eucharist throughout the world.

We are reminded of God’s limitless love for us.

Not only does God want to be a ‘God-with-us’ but also a ‘God-in-us.’

At the end of the Eucharistic celebration, we are invited to GO IN PEACE,  
We are challenged to be at peace with ourselves and to live in peace with others.

To go as members of a community with a sense of belonging.

To go forth and live what we have celebrated.

To do the simple things that Jesus did, to serve and to be served, to give and receive.

To turn away from self-interest and to give unconditionally, especially to those who are different from us and those we struggle with relationally.

Because of the Eucharist, no one should ever say: “What use is my life? What good can I do? What, am I doing in this world?” Each one of us are in this world to share our giftedness. The gift of our life must shine through all that we say and do, our love, peace, joy, and happiness. The important question is not ‘what we can do for each other but what we can be for each other.’

# Sharing Eucharist



He was old, tired and sweaty, pushing a disregarded shopping trolley down the street,  
stopping now and then to poke around in someone's garbage.  
I wanted to tell him about Eucharist,  
but the look in his eyes, the despair in his face,  
told me to forget it.  
I simply smiled, said 'Hi!' and gave him Eucharist.

She was cute, nice build, too much paint,  
a little wobbly on her feet as she slid from her bar stool,  
offering me a drink.  
'No thanks, not tonight' and I gave her Eucharist.

She lives alone, her husband dead,  
her family gone.  
She talked at you, not to you,  
words, endless words poured out.  
I listened attentively and gave her Eucharist.

Downtown, lights change from red to green and back again.  
The streets are a hive of activity with people rushing from one shop to another.  
The noise level is high with the blowing of horns, screeching of breaks,  
people laughing and talking and tired children crying.  
I stood still, in the midst of it all, said 'Thank you, God'  
and made them Eucharist.

I laughed at myself and told myself,  
'You with all your self-centredness, selfishness and forgetfulness,  
I forgive you, I accept you, I love you.'  
It is also necessary to give ones-self Eucharist.

# Blessing

I bless you with the love of Christ.  
May his love carry you safely all your days.

I bless you with the peace of Christ.  
May his peace relieve the pain and anxiety  
that is in your heart.

I bless you with the presence of Christ.  
May his presence be beside you,  
within you, before you, always.

I bless you with the healing of Christ.  
May his healing fill you and restore you.

I bless you with the forgiveness of Christ.  
May his forgiveness magnify your vision  
and inspire your decisions.

I bless you with the faithfulness of Christ.  
May his faithfulness deepen your friendships  
and strengthen your relationships.

I bless with the Body of Christ.  
May the Eucharist be the source and summit  
of your journey back to God.

Anna Burke - **While They Were at Table**

