



own imminent suffering and death, he gives them something simpler and more concrete: something to touch, taste, repeat and remember – something that would keep them together over the days ahead.

As well as being a sacrament of God's self-gift to us, the Eucharist is also a sacrament of our self-gift to one another. In his first letter to the Corinthians, St Paul tells the Corinthians off for the way that they are celebrating the Lord's Supper, and talks about the dangers of eating and drinking "without recognising the Body" (1 Corinthians 11:29). He is not just talking about the need to receive the bread and the cup carefully, conscious that they are the body and blood of the Lord. He is also talking about the need to receive them in a way that recognises the body who are gathered to celebrate and remember together. The word "body" is significant: it's not just a group of people, it is a body of people, a unit, who belong to one another and depend upon one another. Celebrating as the Corinthians have been doing, with one person going hungry while another is getting drunk, fails to recognise that.

## SAVED TOGETHER

Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli tutti* (Brothers and sisters all), released in October last year, is about how we belong to one another as a body, not only as the Church gathered around the Eucharist, but as a global community. The coronavirus pandemic, the Pope says, has shown that "one person's problems are the problems of all", and that "no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together" (32). When we fail to recognise the rights of migrants, or pursue exploitative trade deals with poorer nations, when we treat political opponents with contempt, or ignore the equality of women, we are guilty of "not recognising the body". The feast of Corpus Christi invites us to renew our devotion, both to the Eucharist and to one another.

## Mass text

### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**He fed them with the finest wheat  
and satisfied them with honey from the rock.**

### FIRST READING Exodus 24:3-8

### PSALM Psalm 115

**RESPONSE The cup of salvation I will raise;  
I will call on the Lord's name.**

**Or Alleluia!**

1. 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.**
2. 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.**
3. 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.**

### SECOND READING Hebrews 9:11-15

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!  
I am the living bread which has come down  
from heaven,  
says the Lord.  
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.  
Alleluia!**

### GOSPEL Mark 14:12-16. 22-26

### COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood  
remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.**

### Next Sunday's Readings:

Ezekiel 17:22-24  
2 Corinthians 5:6-10  
Mark 4:26-34



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# SUNDAY BULLETIN

## REAL PRESENCE



The last twelve months have taught us a huge amount about the importance of bodies and physical presence to one another. With households, families and friendship groups separated by lockdown and mixing restrictions for long periods, many of us have got better at staying in touch in digital ways. Couples have met and started dating over FaceTime, grandparents have met new grandchildren over Zoom, and the funerals of loved ones have been livestreamed: the whole cycle of life has moved online. But even as we are enormously grateful for how technology brings us together and enables us to connect in ways that were unimaginable fifty years ago, we know it's just not the same. We feel the absence of real presence: we miss being able to stroke the brow of someone who is sick, or hug someone who is exhausted and stressed, we miss the way a new baby grips our fingers. Amid the anxiety and hardship the pandemic has brought for many people, we are deeply conscious of our need for this real presence to each other.

Corpus Christi, the feast of the body and blood of Christ, is all about real, flesh-and-blood presence. The Gospel tells the story of Jesus sharing a Passover meal with his disciples. As he has done many times before, Jesus takes bread and, in a recognisable gesture, breaks it and gives it to them, saying, "This is my body." He then offers them the wine, saying, "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many." The words are so familiar to us that it is hard to hear them like the disciples, as something new and perplexing. Jesus had tried to tell them about his suffering and death, and prepare them for the collapse of their dreams of what the kingdom of God was going to be like, but they hadn't really understood. So, facing his

## Building a civilisation of love



Today we begin a new series in which Dr Theodora Hawksley, a theologian working at the London Jesuit Centre, looks at the Church's social teaching.

6 JUNE 2021

THE MOST HOLY BODY  
AND BLOOD OF CHRIST  
(CORPUS CHRISTI)

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK 11