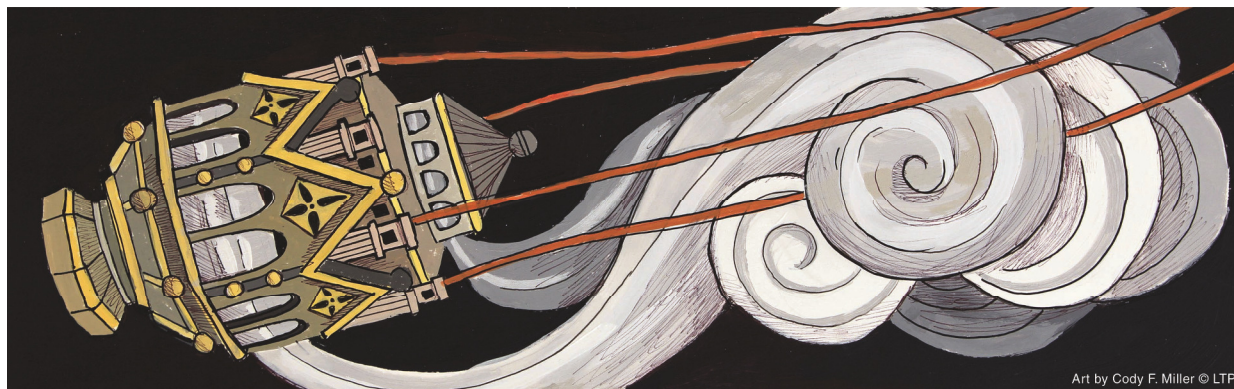


Eucharistic Processions

Especially on the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Solemnity

◆ Some Guidance and Liturgical Catechesis ◆

Prepared by Eliot Kapitan, Office for Worship and the Catechumenate
for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
4 May 2015



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Diocese of Springfield in Illinois – Catholic Pastoral Center – 1615 West Washington Street – Springfield IL 62702-4757 – (217) 698-8500 – <http://www.dio.org>

◆ Context ◆

ONE. The **Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ** (Corpus Christi) is a Solemnity that falls on the Sunday after the Most Holy Trinity in the Dioceses of the United States. This annual celebration occurs two weeks after Pentecost toward the beginning of summer in the return to Ordinary Time following the Great Easter 50-Days.

The *Ceremonial of Bishops* offers this guidance for this Solemnity and for the procession that is associated with it. It offers some rich concepts for preaching and for catechesis.

385. The institution of the eucharist has as a special memorial the Mass of the Lord's Supper, when Christ the Lord shared a meal with his disciples and gave them the sacrament of his body and blood to be celebrated in the Church. The solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) further proposes the cultus of the blessed sacrament to the faithful so that they may celebrate the wonderful works of God, signified by the sacrament and accomplished by the paschal mystery of Christ. This solemnity is also intended to teach the faithful how to share in the eucharistic sacrifice and to have it more profoundly influence their life, to revere the presence of Christ the Lord in this sacrament, and to offer the thanks due for God's gifts.

386. In its devotion the Church has handed down as a distinctive feature of the celebration of this solemnity a procession in which the eucharist is carried solemnly and with singing through the streets, and the Christian people give public witness to their belief in the sacrament of the eucharist and to their devotion....

TWO. The SACRED CONGREGATION FOR RITES **Instruction** *Eucharisticum mysterium*, on the Eucharist, 25 May 1967, provides this guidance and norms concerning processions with the Holy Eucharist during the initial time of reform following the Second Vatican Council. This excerpt addresses the necessary connection between devotional prayer and liturgical prayer, the importance of public witness to faith, and the role of the diocesan Bishop for oversight.

III. EUCHARISTIC DEVOTIONS

58. Devotion, both private and public, toward the sacrament of the altar even outside Mass, that conforms to the norms laid down by lawful authority and in the present Instruction is strongly advocated by the Church, since the eucharistic sacrifice is the source and summit of the whole Christian life [LG, no. 11].

In structuring these devotional exercises, account should be taken of the norms determined by Vatican Council II concerning the relationship to be observed between the liturgy and other, nonliturgical sacred services. Particular attention should be paid to this one: "These devotions should be so fashioned that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some way derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy, by its very nature far surpasses any of them" [SC, no. 13].

IV. EUCHARISTIC PROCESSIONS

59. In processions in which the eucharist is carried through the streets solemnly with singing, especially on the feast of Corpus Christi, the Christian people give public witness to their faith and their devotion toward this sacrament.

However, it is for the local Ordinary to decide on both the advisability of such processions in today's conditions and on a place and plan for them that will ensure their being carried out with decorum and without any loss of reverence toward this sacrament.

THREE. The CONGREGATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS AND DIVINE WORSHIP **Instruction *Inaestimabile donum***, norms for the worship of the Eucharistic mystery, 4 April, 1980. This excerpt notes the need of attending to the norms of the ritual books:

22. With regard to exposition of the holy eucharist, either prolonged or brief, and with regard to processions of the blessed sacrament, eucharistic congresses and the whole ordering of eucharistic piety, the pastoral indications and directions given in the *Roman Ritual* are to be observed.

FOUR. UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS approved ritual book, ***Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist: Presider's Edition*** [OSEHE], provides additional clarity with these norms:

20. Processions within the body of a church are no longer permitted [*Notitiae* 11 (1975, 64)]. A procession with the blessed sacrament should go from one church to another. Nevertheless, if local circumstances require, the procession may return to the same church where it began [HCWEOM, no. 107].

21. In the course of the procession there may be stations where the eucharistic blessing is given, if there is such a custom and some pastoral advantage recommends it. Songs and prayers should be planned with the purpose of expressing the faith of the participants and the centering of their attention on the Lord alone [*Notitiae* 4 (1968, 133-134)].

FIVE. Finally, the *Roman Missal, Third Editions* provides this rubric at the end of the texts for the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ:

It is desirable that a procession take place after the Mass in which the Host to be carried in the procession is consecrated. However, nothing prohibits a procession from taking place even after a public and lengthy period of adoration following the Mass. If a procession takes place after Mass, when the Communion of the faithful is over, the monstrance in which the consecrated host has been placed is set on the altar. When the Prayer after Communion has been said, the Concluding Rites are omitted and the procession forms.

◆ Ritual Books to Consult and Use ◆

Lectionary for Mass [LM]

- **Year A: LM, no. 167A** [in the years 2017, 2020, 2023, 2026, etc.]
Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a – He gave you a food unknown to you and your fathers.
Psalm 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20 – (12) Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.
1 Corinthians 10:16-17 – The bread is one, and we, though many, are one body.
[Sequence: Lauda Sion] *
Alleluia: John 6:51 – I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord; /
whoever eats this bread will live forever.
John 6:51-58 – My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.
 - **Year B: LM, no. 168B** [in the years 2015, 2018, 2021, 2024, etc.]
Exodus 24:3-8 – This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you.
Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16, 17-18 – (13) I will take the cup of salvation and call on the
name of the Lord.
Hebrews 9:11-15 – The blood of Christ will cleanse our consciences.
[Sequence: Lauda Sion] *
Alleluia: John 6:51 – I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord; /
whoever eats this bread will live forever.
Mark 14:12-16, 22-26 – This is my body. This is my blood.
 - **Year C: LM, no. 169C** [in the years 2016, 2019, 2022, 2025, etc.]
Genesis 14:18-230 – Melchizedek brought out bread and wine.
Psalm 110:1, 2, 3, 4 – (4b) You are a priest forever, in the line of Melchizedek.
1 Corinthians 11:23-26 – For as often as you eat and drink, you proclaim the death of the
Lord.
[Sequence: Lauda Sion] *
Alleluia: John 6:51 – I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord; /
whoever eats this bread will live forever.
Luke 9:11b-17 – They all ate and were satisfied.
- * **Note:** [Sequence: Lauda Sion] – the brackets denote that this is optional.

Roman Missal, Third Edition – Proper prayers for The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ are found toward the very end of the Proper of Time in the section “The Solemnities of the Lord during Ordinary Time”.

Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass [HCWEOM], nos. 101-108.

Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist: Presider's Edition [OSEHE], nos. 17-25.

◆ Bishop Paprocki Pastoral Letter 2014 ◆ Excerpt on Processions

Bishop Thomas John Paprocki wrote *Ars celebrandi et adorandi* A Pastoral Letter on the Art of Celebrating the Eucharistic Liturgy Properly and Adoring the Lord in the Eucharist Devoutly. He issued it on 22 June 2014, the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. The seventh segment treats Processions with the Blessed Sacrament. He wrote in part:

34. Pope Benedict XVI spoke eloquently about the meaning of the *Corpus Christi* procession for contemporary Catholics in his homilies for the feast. The procession is a profession of faith: the Solemnity of Corpus Christi developed at a time when Catholics were both affirming and defining their faith “in Jesus Christ, alive and truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist,” and the procession is a public statement of that belief. The sacrament of the Lord’s Body and Blood always “goes above and beyond the walls of our churches.” The procession blurs the separation between what we do inside the church, and what we do outside: we immerse Christ, so to speak, “in the daily routine of our lives, so that he may walk where we walk and live where we live.” Pope Benedict declared, “The procession represents an immense and public blessing for our city.”¹⁹

35. The *Code of Canon Law* encourages liturgical processions outside the church, “When it can be done in the judgment of the diocesan bishop, as a public witness of the veneration toward the Most Holy Eucharist, a procession is to be conducted through the public streets, especially on the solemnity of the Body and the Blood of Christ.”²⁰ The leading of processions outside the church is among the specific liturgical functions especially entrusted to the pastor.²¹

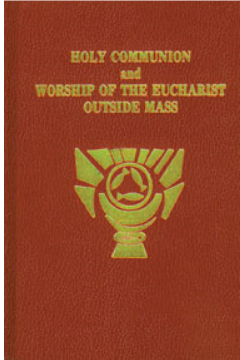
36. I highly encourage and give permission for pastors to conduct processions with the Blessed Sacrament through the public streets, especially on the solemnity of the Body and the Blood of Christ, as a witness to our faith in the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist and as an expression of our belief that God is in our midst even in our everyday lives. Suitable arrangements are to be made with public authorities and local law enforcement officials for the safety of the participants.

¹⁹ See Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Thursday, 7 June 2007, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2007/documents/hf_benxvi_hom_20070607_corpus-christi_en.html, and Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Thursday, May 26, 2005, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2005/documents/hf_benxvi_hom_20050526_corpusdomini_en.html.

²⁰ *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 944.

²¹ *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 530.

◆ Study Guide on the Ritual Book for Eucharistic Processions ◆



Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass [HCWEOM].

Includes the General Introduction; (1) Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass; (2) Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister; (3) Forms of Worship of the Holy Eucharist – Exposition, **Processions**, Congresses; (4) Texts; and Appendix.

New York: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 1976.

ISBN: 0-89942-648-4, hardback, 144 pp, 5 ½ x 8 ¼, 1

ribbon, \$14.95, Catholic Book Product Code: 648/22.

<p>ROMAN RITUAL. <i>Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass [HCWEOM],</i> 1976.</p>	<h3>Guidance for Ritual Celebration</h3>
<p>2. EUCCHARISTIC PROCESSIONS</p> <p>101. When the eucharist is carried through the streets in a solemn procession with singing, the Christian people give public witness of faith and devotion toward the sacrament.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This procession is Liturgy in the formal sense, a liturgical act of walking with the Lord. 2. Since a solemn procession gives public witness, great care is taken in planning and preparation. 3. Singing is a necessary part of the procession. Hymns and through-composed songs are difficult to maintain in a long procession. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The choir can more easily maintain tempo and pitch when they stand and walk together. But they are hard to hear by those farther back in the procession. Spreading musicians two-by-two throughout the procession creates its own difficulties making it more difficult for musicians to hear other musicians. • Singing an un-memorized text off a song sheet while walking is also difficult. Familiar refrains, antiphons, and acclamations are easier to maintain in procession. • “Walkable” instruments are a blessing: the sounds of hand bells and drums carry well and will help maintain both pitch and tempo.

It is for the local Ordinary, however, to judge whether this is opportune in today's circumstances, and to determine the time, place, and order of such processions, so that they may be conducted with dignity and without loss of reverence to the sacrament.¹²

102. The annual procession on the feast of Corpus Christi, or on an appropriate day near this feast, has a special importance and meaning for the pastoral life of the parish or city. It is therefore desirable to continue this procession, in accordance with the law, when today's circumstances permit and when it can truly be a sign of common faith and adoration.

In the principal districts of large cities there may be additional eucharistic processions for pastoral reasons at the discretion of the local Ordinary. If the procession cannot be held on the feast of Corpus Christi, it is fitting to hold some kind of public celebration for the entire city or its principal districts in the cathedral church or other appropriate places.

103. It is fitting that a eucharistic procession begin after the Mass in which the host to be carried in procession has been consecrated. A procession may also take place, however, at the end of a lengthy period of public adoration.

Consider other instruments that are typically part of marching bands.

- Some silence is also fitting.

4. Other ways of suitable praying may also take place as long as it is focused on the Lord alone [HCWEOM, no. 107 and OSEHE, no. 21].

5. Bishop Paprocki encourages and gives permission to pastors to conduct processions especially on the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

6. He also requires that suitable arrangements are made with public authorities and local law enforcement officials.

7. See Pastoral Letter *Ars celebrandi et adorandi*, no. 36.

8. In towns and cities with more than one parish, pastors may wish to collaborate on a single joint procession. This may easily accommodate the Church's desire for "the procession to go from one church to another" whenever possible [HCWEOM, no. 107 and OSEHE, no. 20].

9. It is ideal that Mass of the day immediately precede the procession. At the end of Holy Communion, the monstrance is prepared and placed on the altar. All may sit for the usual brief silence. A Song of Praise may then be sung. The Prayer after Communion is prayed in the usual way. The Sacrament is incensed and the procession begins.

104. Eucharistic processions should be arranged in accordance with local customs concerning the decoration of the streets and the order followed by the participants. In the course of the procession there may be stations where the eucharistic blessing is given, if this custom is in effect and is of pastoral advantage. Songs and prayers should be directed that all proclaim their faith in Christ and direct their attention to the Lord alone.

105. The priest who carries the blessed sacrament may wear the vestments used for the celebration of Mass if the procession takes place immediately afterward, or he may vest in a white cope.

106. Lights, incense, and the canopy under which the priest carrying the blessed sacrament walks should be used in accordance with local customs.

10. Alternately, at the end of Communion, a period of lengthy Adoration of the Holy Eucharist may begin after the Prayer after Communion with the procession following it at a later published time. This may be helpful to accommodate the needs of a neighboring parish or for public safety.

11. See the rubrics and outline below for details.

12. The custom of stopping at stations for the giving of a Eucharistic blessing is not required but may take place as per the norms in HCWEOM, no. 104.

13. An advantage for stopping at stations is that a worship aid with songs and other prayers may more easily be used while the assembly is standing. Prepare in advance that all may hear by how the assembly is gathered at the station and by use of a sound system if that is possible.

14. The songs and prayers must focus on Jesus Christ the Lord alone.

15. There may a reading with some brief preaching on an aspect of the Eucharistic presence and mystery.

16. The Eucharistic blessing may be given. It is not required at the station(s) especially if all in the procession continue into the church for Benediction at the end.

17. A procession is not permitted to remain inside the church building [OSEHE, no. 20].

18. A canopy (baldachin) is not required. Its use depends on local custom.

19. Although the ritual books do not give an order of the procession (it, too, is left to local custom) the *Ceremonial of Bishops* does. This order may help parish planning:

- Crossbearer, accompanied by candlebearers
- Clergy wearing copes or vestments for Mass
- Deacon of the Mass
- Censerbearer with burning incense
- Priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament [walking

<p>107. It is fitting that the procession should go from one church to another. Nevertheless, if local circumstances require, the procession may return to the same church where it began.</p> <p>108. At the end of the procession benediction with the blessed sacrament should be given in the church where the procession ends or at another appropriate place. Then the blessed sacrament is reposed.</p> <p>12. See Congregation for Rites, instruction <i>Eucharisticum mysterium</i>, no. 59: AAS 59 (1967) 570.</p>	<p>under a canopy if it is used] and accompanied by torchbearers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people [carrying lighted candles] <p>20. Additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable banners • Musical instruments
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Note 1. See the companion document, “**Exposition of the Holy Eucharist: Some Liturgical Catechesis**” prepared by Eliot Kapitan, Office for Worship and the Catechumenate for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, 17 February 2015. It provides guidance on Exposition and Benediction:

- Ritual Books for Exposition of the Holy Eucharist
- Outline – Exposition of the Holy Eucharist
- Some Liturgical Catechesis (bulletin shorts)

It is accessible on the diocesan website, worship pages, Rites to Use, at this direct link: http://www.dio.org/uploads/files/Worship/Rites_to_Use/Exposition--LitCatechesis_Feb2015_final.pdf.

Note 2. After all the preparation, the procession may be called off or delayed because of weather. Since a procession is no longer permitted inside the church building [OSEHE, no. 20], a suitable time for Adoration follows the Exposition on the altar that includes song, prayer, and silence. Conclude this liturgical praying with Benediction in the usual way.

◆ Torches and Canopy (Baldachin) ◆

Torches or lanterns are designed for carrying candles in procession outdoors. The candle may be housed within red or clear glass. When the Holy Eucharist is exposed, four to six candles are used [HCWEOM, no. 85].

A **canopy** (also called a baldachin) is not required. It does, however, provide these advantages: it creates a sacred space for the Eucharist, it protects the monstrance from falling objects and falling light rain, it keeps the Eucharist “visible” to everyone in procession, and it can frame the space at the outside station.

When the poles of the canopy are long enough – eight to nine feet – then they may rest on the ground over the designed station for song and prayer. A small pedestal of suitable height, large enough to hold the monstrance, permits the Priest to set it down (and rest his arms) during the praying.

The size for this canopy is typically from 4.5 x 4.5 feet to 5 x 7 feet. The edges that drop down may be from 8 to 12 inches deep. Poles for each corner should be 8 to 9 feet. Two horizontal poles running front to back under the top of the fabric can help stabilize the canopy. Purchase of a canopy from a church supply house or artist can easily range from \$1000.00 to \$4000.00 or \$5000.00. Parishioners may be willing to design and make a suitable canopy. Give them enough time to accomplish this task.

These images will help this design and fabrication task.



**Saints James and Patrick Parish, Decatur IL.
Diocese of Springfield in Illinois**

This shows the beginning of the procession of several parishes and hospital leaving the parish campus. Note the four torches at the sides. Note the Jubilee 2003 banners.



**Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Springfield IL
Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
2014**







◆ Lauda Sion ◆ Sequence for the Body and Blood of Christ

The optional sequence for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ is *Laud, O Zion (Lauda Sion)*. It has a long and a shorter form. It may be used in various ways during the procession, especially if it is not sung during the Liturgy of the Word before the Alleluia. For example:

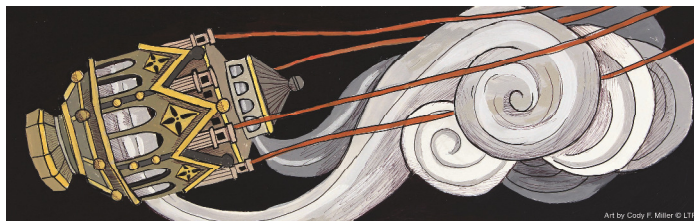
- Some beginning verses may be sung in the church as the procession is organized and begins.
- Some verses may be sung while standing for prayer at a station.
- The final verses (shorter form) may be sung after the procession enters the church and people take their places for Benediction.
- Musicians may choose a common or familiar psalm tone for this singing.

Laud, O Zion, your salvation,
Laud with hymns of exultation,
Christ, your king and shepherd true:

Bring him all the praise you know,
He is more than you bestow.
Never can you reach his due.

Special theme for glad thanksgiving
Is the quick'ning and the living
Bread today before you set:

From his hands of old partaken,
As we know, by faith unshaken,
Where the Twelve at supper met.

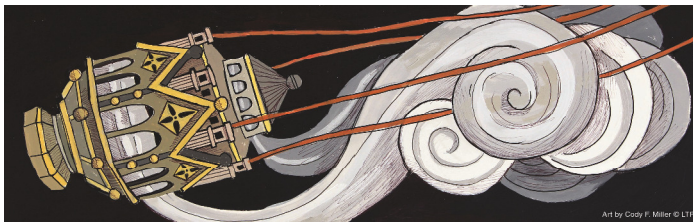


Full and clear ring out your chanting,
Joy nor sweetest grace be wanting,
From your heart let praises burst:

For today the feast is holden,
When the institution olden
Of that supper was rehearsed.

Here the new law's new oblation,
By the new king's revelation,
Ends the form of ancient rite:

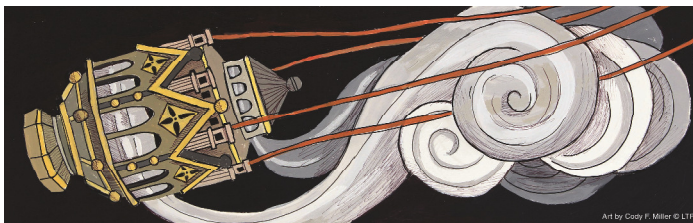
Now the new the old effaces,
Truth away the shadow chases,
Light dispels the gloom of night.



What he did at supper seated,
Christ ordained to be repeated,
His memorial ne'er to cease:

And his rule for guidance taking,
Bread and wine we hallow, making
Thus our sacrifice of peace.

This the truth each Christian learns,
Bread into his flesh he turns,
To his precious blood the wine:



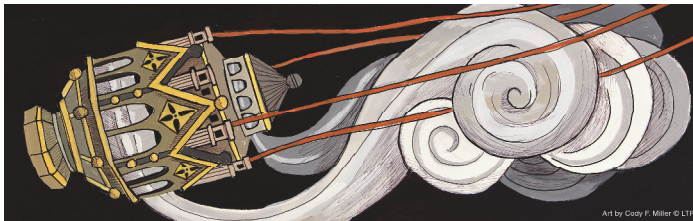
Sight has fail'd, nor thought conceives,
But a dauntless faith believes,
Resting on a pow'r divine.

Here beneath these signs are hidden
Priceless things to sense forbidden;
Signs, not things are all we see:

Blood is poured and flesh is broken,
Yet in either wondrous token
Christ entire we know to be.

Whoso of this food partakes,
Does not rend the Lord nor breaks;
Christ is whole to all that taste:

Thousands are, as one, receivers,
One, as thousands of believers,
Eats of him who cannot waste.

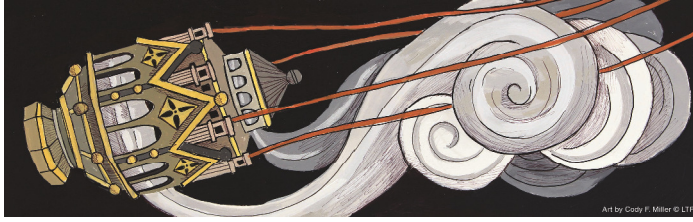


Bad and good the feast are sharing,
Of what divers dooms preparing,
Endless death, or endless life.

Life to these, to those damnation,
See how like participation
Is with unlike issues rife.

When the sacrament is broken,
Doubt not, but believe 'tis spoken,
That each sever'd outward token
doth the very whole contain.

Nought the precious gift divides,
Breaking but the sign betides
Jesus still the same abides,
still unbroken does remain.



The shorter form of the sequence begins here.

Lo! the angel's food is given
To the pilgrim who has striven;
see the children's bread from heaven,
which on dogs may not be spent.

Truth the ancient types fulfilling,
Isaac bound, a victim willing,
Paschal lamb, its lifeblood spilling,
manna to the fathers sent.

Very bread, good shepherd, tend us,
Jesu, of your love befriend us,
You refresh us, you defend us,
Your eternal goodness send us
In the land of life to see.

You who all things can and know,
Who on earth such food bestow,
Grant us with your saints, though lowest,
Where the heav'nly feast you show,
Fellow heirs and guests to be.
Amen. Alleluia.



Excerpt from the *Lectionary for Mass*.
The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

This poetic English translation of the sequence of the Roman Missal is taken from the Roman Missal approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States © 1964 by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, Inc. All rights reserved.

◆ Roman Missal Texts ◆

[In the Dioceses of the United States]
Sunday after the Most Holy Trinity
The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
(CORPUS CHRISTI)
Solemnity

Entrance Antiphon

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

Cf. Ps 81 (80): 17

Collect

**O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament
have left us a memorial of your Passion,
grant us, we pray,
so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood
that we may always experience in ourselves
the fruits of your redemption.
Who live and reign with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.**

Prayer over the Offerings

**Grant your Church, O Lord, we pray,
the gifts of unity and peace,
whose signs are to be seen in mystery
in the offerings we here present.
Through Christ our Lord.**

Preface II of the Most Holy Eucharist

The Fruits of the Most Holy Eucharist

**It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Christ our Lord.**

**For at the Last Supper with his Apostles,
establishing for the ages to come the saving memorial of the Cross,
he offered himself to you as the unblemished Lamb,
the acceptable gift of perfect praise.**

**Nourishing your faithful by this sacred mystery,
you make them holy, so that the human race,
bounded by one world,**

**may be enlightened by one faith
and united by one bond of charity.**

**And so, we approach the table of this wondrous Sacrament,
so that, bathed in the sweetness of your grace,
we may pass over to the heavenly realities here foreshadowed.**

**Therefore, all creatures of heaven and earth
sing a new song in adoration,
and we, with all the host of Angels,
cry out, and without end we acclaim:**

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

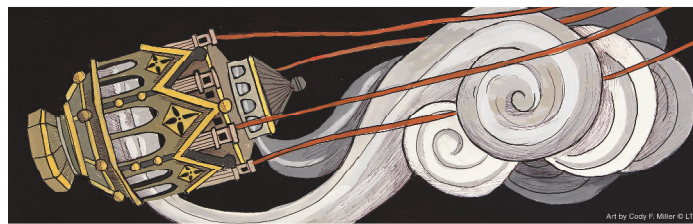
Communion Antiphon

Jn 6: 57

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

Prayer after Communion

**Grant, O Lord, we pray,
that we may delight for all eternity
in that share in your divine life,
which is foreshadowed in the present age
by our reception of your precious Body and Blood.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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