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Uniting Word & World

For Sunday, June 7, 2015

**Eucharistic Presence**

## **This Sunday's Scripture Readings**

**The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ**

<http://new.usccb.org/bible/readings/060715.cfm>

**Exodus 24:3-8**

**Hebrews 9:11-15**

**Mark 14:12-16, 22-26**



Our first reading this weekend from the Book of Exodus makes a very bold and confident statement of faith. "All that the LORD has said, we will heed and do." People of faith must constantly be reminded of what God says and their willingness to accept what is said through lives of service. It is interesting to note that the sprinkling of blood on the people is really a profound statement of connection and sharing; of God sharing the life of his covenant with his people and the people sharing their lives with God. The Eucharist, the heart and center of Catholic life, brings this sharing to its most perfect level.

At every Eucharist and in a more particular way this week as we celebrate the solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, we have to remind ourselves of what God is saying and asking us to do. St. Augustine stated it most clearly when he said that it is through the Eucharist that we become what we eat. Ultimately, then, God is asking us to become the very image of Christ. The Eucharist is not something that is celebrated for the sole purpose of getting us to heaven. While our reading from the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us of the "promised eternal inheritance" that awaits us, it is even more profound. The Eucharist is celebrated so that transformation can occur in the lives of those who receive Christ! We become what we eat.

Mark's Gospel reminds us that on that first eucharistic night of Passover, a New Covenant came into being. It was a covenant that asked those first disciples and those who follow after to do all that the Lord had commanded and to become like him. The amen we boldly state when presented with the body of Christ is not only a statement of our faith in the Real Presence before us but a bold statement of faith in our willingness to become that presence!

It is no secret that Jesus went out to those most in need. He forgave the sinner, ate with the outcast, defended and fed those who were poor and hungry, worked for true justice, risked being unpopular, willingly accepted suffering and death, always stayed connected with his Abba Father, and consistently reminded folks that God's compassion, love, and mercy trump everything, even the law. This is the Christ that the Eucharist calls us to be. As we look around our churches, our town and cities, and our world there are many places and people who need to see the face and body of Christ. Some of those most in need may be right within our families. But it is always in the poorest of the poor and those most vulnerable where the greatest need exists. When the gift of the eucharistic Christ takes root in our hearts, we can more readily see the face of Christ in others.

There are many who are vulnerable, but I believe that highest on the list are the homeless. They show us the face of Christ. Whatever the cause, to have no place to go and no place to call home takes a toll on the human spirit. For Jesus when there were hungry people, they were fed. God asks us to do the same ... feed people. There are many who are hungry physically, emotionally, and spiritually and gifted by the eucharistic presence of Christ, we bring them Christ himself. Who are the hungry around us and how can we feed them?

When others are hurting, you comfort them. When others are hungry, you feed them. When others need clothes, you provide them. When others are cold, you warm them. When others are in prison, you visit them. With [over a million people who are homeless](#) and [over a quarter of them children](#), it is important to ask the question why and strategize for ways to lessen the problem or at least effectively respond. But asking the question "why" cannot let us off the hook for responding to the immediate need that presents itself at our door. Whether a person's current station in life is self-imposed or the result of being victimized, it is second to the fact that that person still needs help. We cannot lock the door and send others away and still believe we are the presence of Christ. It doesn't work like that.

The issues behind the cause of homelessness, loneliness, depression, and all of the things that "starve" people and rob them of freedom and life are complicated with no easy answers to be found. People are complicated. Our shelters are filled with people who have tremendous stories to tell, stories of domestic violence, of being a lost and emotionally wounded veteran, of not being able to afford rent and provide for their families in spite of working two jobs, of losing their homes, of losing their spouse, and of struggling with mental illness and addiction. When you listen to what these people have to say and their eyes meet yours, they are the eyes of Christ and they need to see Christ looking back.

The Eucharist, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, is about celebrating, strengthening, enriching, focusing, and becoming. The tabernacles in our churches may need to be locked but the tabernacles of our hearts need to be wide open. John 6:51 reminds us that Jesus is the living bread that came down from heaven. Figure out who around you is hungry, make an act of faith, and be that living bread for them. Leave what you are to do and what you are to say to the One who lives within you. "I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord."

Rev. Mark Suslenko

## PRAYER

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Shelter us, O Lord, and give us the compassion and

knowledge to help others in their search for shelter.  
Protect us, O Lord, from darkness, and give us the  
wisdom and skills to protect others who live in unsafe  
and unhealthy housing and long for the light.  
Bless us, O Lord, with homes that make comfort and  
joy realities for our families, and give us the grace to  
ensure this for all families.

Amen.

—“Longing for Home” prayer by [Education for Justice](#).

## NOTICES

### FORTNIGHT FOR FREEDOM

The Fortnight for Freedom: Freedom to Serve will take place from June 21 to July 4, 2014. The theme of this year’s Fortnight will focus on the freedom to serve the poor and vulnerable in accord with human dignity and the Church’s teaching. For more information and resources for your parish, visit <http://usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/fortnight-for-freedom/index.cfm>.

### 2015 DIOCESAN INFORMATION SYSTEMS CONFERENCE (DISC)

The 2015 DISC conference on Wednesday, June 17 to Friday, June 19 will be hosted at the Best Western of Alexandria Inn & Suites & Conference Center in Alexandria, Louisiana. This year’s conference features presentations and hands-on training from industry experts and diocesan peers. Breakout sessions are offered in two conference tracks with content tailored to the needs of management and technical staff. To register, visit: <http://conference.discinfo.org/>.

### CATHOLIC NEW MEDIA CELEBRATION, Atlanta, June 7, 2015

Join Catholic new media producers, clergy and religious, lay workers, and faithful of all walks of life at the Catholic New Media Celebration in Atlanta, Georgia on June 7, 2015. The CNMC provides opportunities for networking and professional development for diocesan communicators, new media producers, and Catholic laypeople interested in the New Evangelization. For more information and to register, visit <http://sqpn.com/cnmc2015/>.

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