

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY & BLOOD OF CHRIST

(Sunday after Trinity Sunday)

Year A

Moses is attempting to rally the troops. He reminds the Israelites of what God has done for them. Vary pace, intensity and volume to help you make Moses' points. You want your listeners to conclude that they need to make sure their behavior reflects how they understand and respond to God's generosity and commitment to them.

Reading 1

Citation: Deuteronomy, Chap. 8, Verses 2-3, 14b-16a

Deuteronomy 8: 2-3, 14b-16a

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

Moses said to the people:

"Remember

(question in voice -- this sentence)

how for forty years now

the LORD, your God,

has directed all your journeying in the desert,

so as to test you by affliction

and find out whether or not

it was your intention to keep his commandments.

(voice goes down) (short pause)

He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger,

and then fed you with manna,

a food unknown to you and your fathers,

(almost on parenthetical side)

in order to show you that not by bread alone does one live,

but by every word

that comes forth from the mouth of the LORD.

(voice goes down) (forceful) (short pause)

"Do not forget the LORD,

your God,

who brought you out of the land of Egypt,

that place of slavery;

(voice goes up slightly)

(parenthetical ?) (very short pause)

who guided you through the vast and terrible desert

(voice goes up slightly)

with its saraph serpents and scorpions,

(parenthetical ?)

its parched and waterless ground;

(parenthetical ?) (very short pause)

who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock

(voice goes up slightly)

and fed you in the desert with manna,

a food unknown to your fathers."

(almost parenthetical)

The word of the Lord.

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Paul is teaching. He's explaining how Jesus shares His body and blood with those who believe in Him. He is not picking a fight with anyone; just making sure they consider what he thinks is very important. Be Paul!

Reading 2

Citation: 1 Corinthians, Chap. 10, Verses 16-17
1 Corinthians 10: 16-17

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

(somewhat insistent)

The cup of blessing that we bless,
is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?

(positive argument)
(strong question) (pause)

The bread that we break,
is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

(positive argument)
(strong question) (pause)

Because the loaf of bread is one,
we, though many, are one body,
for we all partake of the one loaf.

(not so argumentative)
(very short pause)
(slow to end of sentence)

The word of the Lord.

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This is a very difficult proclamation because of its topic (Catholicism has been accused of promoting cannibalism!). We know, today, that Jesus was referring to His Body and Blood in the Eucharist. Tell this story both from the point of view of Jesus' listeners 2,000 years ago (astonished disbelievers) AND your listeners, today (believers, but -- admit it -- some may be ignorant or skeptical still!). Jesus is preaching with a strong voice to His Jewish listeners; yours should be strong, here, too. But he also realizes that the concept is difficult to grasp. Modify your tone toward gentleness and compassion as Jesus explains why "eating His flesh" is so important! Conclude as a teacher, reminding your listeners (as Jesus reminds the Jews) that miraculously getting food to eat is not a new experience; in fact, it is a sign of God's promise.

GOSPEL

Citation: John, Chap. 6, Verses 51-58
John 6: 51-58

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to the Jewish crowds:

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; (firm; insistent, very short pause)

whoever eats this bread will live forever; (very short pause)

and the bread that I will give (declarative statement)

is my flesh for the life of the world." (short pause)

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying,

"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (puzzlement; confusion)

Jesus said to them,

"Amen, amen, I say to you, (gentle tone this sentence)

unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man (not quite parenthetical)

and drink his blood, (very short pause)

you do not have life within you.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood (firm; convinced whole statement)

has eternal life,

and I will raise him on the last day. (very short pause)

For my flesh is true food,

and my blood is true drink.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me (almost exhorting)

and I in him. (convinced assurance)

Just as the living Father sent me

(you're explaining; gentle)

and I have life because of the Father,

(parenthetical?)

so also the one who feeds on me

will have life because of me.

(definite, affirmation)

This is the bread that came down from heaven.

(firm; you're reminding listeners)

Proclamation Format

Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died,
whoever eats this bread
will live forever."

(stress last paired words strongly)

The Gospel of the Lord.