**Body and Blood of Christ B Lectionary Catechesis**

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| The rich and full meaning and practice of communion as Eucharist and Covenant are central today. While the concept of blood sacrifice seems archaic or out of date, we ask why this is a relevant language to use regarding the Eucharist. Mark’s last supper narratives chooses specific highlights to emphasize, and these should become the focus of the reflection and homily today. |

**FIRST READING: Ex 24, 3-8**

Because of the archaic elements in the sacrifice, the text possibly reflects a very ancient practice, especially when read in its larger context. On the other hand some elements suggests a much later time. Note that the covenant is written down; it does not say anything about stone tablets. The “book” suggests some sort of scroll. The young men performing the sacrifice may indicate a time before the Jerusalem levitic priesthood. There is no evidence except for a possible covenant renewal during the time of King Josiah that this ceremony was repeated. The blood of the covenant is literal and graphic. The next verses have Moses and the leaders implicitly sharing a meal with God. Prefigures of communion and Eucharist fill the passage; a liturgy of the word and liturgy of sacrifice are already present in this text. Jesus takes up these words “blood of the covenant” at the last supper.

**Ch. 24: CCC 2060** Covenant and Commandments are inextricably bound; the people commit to doing and obeying.

**Vs. 7: CCC 2060** Cf. above.

**Vs. 8: CCC 613** Christ’s death secures our redemption, restoring us to communion with God, offering the blood of reconciliation.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is a covenant? (Note that today in our Church marriage and Eucharist are designated as covenants.)  How does Christ’s blood secure our redemption? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What are the challenging commitment in your life? Share.  Heeding and doing form the covenant commitment. What part of God’s Word is difficult and what part is joyful for you to heed and to do? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Share your experience of Communion as a sacred meal with God.  Notice that the covenant is not a private personal event, but communal. How is your faith part of a larger “communion?” |
| **WORSHIP** | Name the three points during the Eucharist when communal assent is given to God.  Half of the Mass is the Liturgy of the Word. Why do we respond with the line, “Thanks be to God,” at the end of the readings? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 116, 12-13. 15-16. 17-18**

The way of the world is death; everything that comes into being is always at once also passing out of being. We are caught in these “cords of death.” In the midst of this constant motion, the soul finds stillness and rest in God, because God rescues us and saves us. The soul responds with thanksgiving and praise. The rhetoric of verse 15 is hard to understand. It does not suggest that God is happy when someone dies, but rather that it is “dear” in the sense of valuable and will not go without meaning. Remember that the psalm at the outset speaks on behalf of the simple and pious person. In the ways of the world, the millions die everyday from war, famine, violence, without any note or twinge from the men who lie. Life in the covenant gives meaning to life and saves the person from oblivion.

**Vs. 12: CCC 224** I Corinthians 4, 7 asks the question: “What have you that you did not receive?” This results in a life of thanksgiving.

**Vs. 13: CCC 1330** The Eucharist is called a sacrifice because it “makes present the one sacrifice of Christ”. Furthermore, it completes and surpasses the sacrifices of the former Covenant. Here the Church finds its whole purpose and center. The Eucharist is a sacred mystery of intermutual commitment between God and humans.

**Vs. 17: CCC 1330** See above.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is the relationship between the cup of salvation here and the blood of the covenant in the first reading?  The Eucharist forms the Church. “The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life,” according to the Catechism. What does the Church mean? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Share the ways that the Eucharist is the source and summit of your life.  What is your commitment to God? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | When was the last time your shared your gratefulness with others? Tell the story.  Name the things, events, relationships for which you are thankful. |
| **WORSHIP** | Why do we call the Eucharist a sacrifice?  The Psalmist speaks of the “sacrifice of Thanksgiving”. Eucharist is a Greek word that means “thanksgiving”. Share your reflections on how this is present for you in your life when you participate in the Mass. |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: Hebrews 9, 11-15**

This passage is part of Hebrew’s central argument about the high priesthood of Christ and the New Covenant. He is speaking literally about the arrangement of the physical objects in the temple. Its orderliness was necessary for the proper execution of the liturgical acts. The author here compares and contrasts the inner and outer temple, here we have “copies” of the things of heaven. The purpose of sacrifice here seems to be to open admittance into the divine presence, because the human person is released from sin’s bondage and reconciled. Worship includes now a share in God’s life through blood.

**Vs. 11- 28: CCC 1476, 1564** Commenting on the relationship between indulgences and the communion of saints, the Church speak of a “treasury” growing upon and since the donation begun with Christ before the Father. The purpose of this work is directed toward the salvation of all. Secondly, priests (presbyters) hold their ordained office only in association with the bishop to preach, to pastor, and to celebrate the sacraments.

**Vs. 11: CCC 586, 662** The Jerusalem Temple has a central role in the life of Jesus, and in some real sense, Jesus becomes the new temple, a dwelling place for God among us. The high priesthood of Christ is fulfilled in the Crucifixion and Ascension, uniting heaven and earth. In the divine heavenly presence of the Father, Christ eternally effects his earthly sacrifice to draw us to himself. This means that Christ is the “central and principle actor of the liturgy.”

**Vs. 12: CCC 1085** Christ offers the perfect and unique sacrifice for human salvation; the liturgy makes this gift present and draws us to eternal life with God.

**Vs. 13-14: CCC 2100** Outward sacrifices only have meaning that flows from the heart sacrifice. The perfect sacrifice of course occurred on the cross, and we are called to imitate this in our lives. We unite ourselves to this sacrifice.

**Vs. 15: CCC 522, 579, 580, 592** We are taught that God prepared for the central action of history, the birth of Christ, by patient centuries through the law and the prophets in the history of Israel. The law carefully prepared Israel to be a perfected society and prepared for the Messiah; fulfillment of the law occurs with zeal, a intense longing manifested in the virtue of one’s life. The new law and new covenant are engraved on the human heart in the Spirit. Our listening and obeying are more intense because it is no longer a matter of formalities.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What are indulgences and their relationship to the lives of the saints?  What is the perfect tabernacle and sanctuary named in this text which Christ enters? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What does it mean that the blood of Christ cleanses our consciences?  How do you imagine your personal sacrifice joined to the one sacrifice of Christ? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Christ mediates a new covenant, not we ourselves for whom it is impossible with God. Imagine your role then as extending the mediation of the new covenant to others.  The texts speaks of “those who are called.” How can they be called unless you evangelize? |
| **WORSHIP** | Share the ways for yourself that Christ is the center of the liturgical action and thereby in extension of your life.  What is the role of the priests in light of these Catechisms statements? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: Mk 14, 12-16. 22-26 The Preparation and the Passover Supper of the Lord**

The gospel is in two distinct parts: first are the preparations for the Passover supper, and second is Mark’s five verses recounting the last supper. Mark’s version is the most brief. Jesus follows traditional and conventional Jewish blessings patterns of his time. The words over the shared bread are few. Over the cup, Jesus alludes to the blood in the first reading, but then he gives an eschatological overlay to the cup of the blood. The new wine he will drink suggests God’s new creation; it is a wine unlike any we have had before. Here Jesus indeed begins a new thing. One note is the inclusion of music in the supper ritual Jesus establishes. Vss. 17-21 narrate Judas’ betrayal. The keynotes here are on the newness of what Jesus does and will do, the deepening sense of anticipation, the orderliness of his actions in a tradition, and the covenant renewal.

**Vss. 12-25: CCC 1339** Christ choose the Passover to effect the Eucharist, the new covenant.

**Vs. 22: CCC 1328** The Eucharist has many names to help us understand the depth of its mystery.

**Vs. 25: CCC 1335, 1403** The Eucharist is prefigured when Jesus blesses the five loaves and distributes them to the crowd through his disciples. The Eucharist is “superabundant” (επιουσιον) pointing to the satisfaction of all human hungers and pointing to its eschatological quality. The same is true of the wine multiplied at Cana. At the last supper, Jesus oriented the Church toward the fulfillment of the reign of God, and that we should pray for its coming.

**Vss. 26-30: CCC 474** The unique union of human and divine natures in Christ means he had the fullness of understanding the plans of the Father.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is the Eucharist? Find the Catechism definition.  Why is the bread and wine unlike any other bread or wine? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What do you do to prepare for Mass attendance? And what does the Church ask us to do?  What is the “bread that satisfies”? In other words, what does the symbol “bread” stand for? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Who can come to the Eucharist and receive Christ? Explain why the Church is a “closed communion” Church.  What flows from the Eucharist that impels you to want to share this with others? |
| **WORSHIP** | Name all the things by which we identify the Mass.  What is the difference between “for many” (Vs. 24) and the former English translation of “for all”? |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: Ordinary Time 11 B: Ezekiel 17, 22-24; Ps 92; II Corinthians 5, 6-10; Mark 4, 26-34**