**Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ – LUKE 2025**

How fortunate we are to celebrate our ***Parish Picnic*** on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. I know that other parishes will probably process around their church with the Eucharist in a Monstrance under a canopy, but we will gather under a canopy or tent with the Eucharist in a Monstrance of living flesh as the Body of Christ.

For this wonderful Solemnity the readings today are powerful, once we understand them and their historical significance.

Melchisedek, the king of Salem or Jerusalem, was blessed by Abram, later called Abraham. The two had fought together, side by side successfully against their enemies. Melchisedek’ name means King of the Zedek tribe of Salem. The kings of many of the tribes were also the High Priests, as was Abraham. Melchisedek offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving for their victories. Notice that ***Sacrifice*** came before the ***Written Word*** which informs us that the sacrifice was ***Bread*** and ***Wine*** of Melchisedek, and later a ram for sacrifice by Abraham, or the ***flesh*** and ***blood*** of a one year old lamb by Moses at the Exodus.

The Sedek tribe of Melchisedek would eventually be incorporated into the tribe of Israel by King David who would share the office of the ***High Priest*** alongside the Jewish High Priest Abiathar. The ***Sadducees*** are the descendants of this hallowed tribe. Melchisedek is mentioned even in our canon of the Mass, “Be pleased to look upon these offerings with a serene and kindly countenance, and to accept them, as once you were pleased to accept the gifts of your servant Abel the just, the sacrifice of ***Abraham***, our father in faith, and the offering of your high priest ***Melchizedek***.

It was during the reign of King David and Solomon, that the written Word of the sacred history of Israel was begun, and later finished by Ezra, the Levitical Priest over 500 years later. This written word would be as known as the Pentateuch. That means the ***Sacrifice*** came before the written ***Word of God***. How blessed are we to continue this sacred tradition stretching back to Melchisedek with ***Bread and Wine*** now consecrated into the ***Body and Blood of Jesus Christ***.

Without the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood at our Eucharist, the liturgy would be incomplete without this ancient action in our Liturgy, and therefore, only a Liturgy of the Word.

Today’s gospel story reminds us that the most massive meal that Jesus provided in his lifetime was for the 5000 in Galilee. We are given a few details. The tradition wants us to grasp how his disciples thought only of human resources for dealing with the situation. Jesus transformed what he found and produced more than sufficient food from a few loaves and fishes. The people were not fed singly but in groups of fifty, reminding us that ***we live in a community*** inspired by the Holy Spirit and move out into the world to spread the Good News.

If Genesis and Corinthians remind us that the Eucharist is a sacrifice, Luke’s account of the feeding of the crowds reminds us that it is also a meal. His gospel records many meals of Jesus. At these meals, Jesus enjoyed the company not only of his own but of those whom conventional society rejected. All are welcome. The climax of these meals was his ***Last Supper*** when, among his disciples as “***one who serves***,” he gave them ***his own body and blood.***

The final scene in Luke’s gospel after the resurrection shows Jesus eating ***fish*** with his disciples. Which is ironic since the symbol for Jesus Christ is the “fish” which when spelt in Greek with the first letters from the title is “**J**esus **C**hrist **S**on of **G**od **S**avior.” One could say they ate the flesh of Jesus Christ symbolically by eating fish.

The feeding of the 5000 is important because it anticipates the Eucharist in the Church. Jesus broke the bread before he gave it to the people. He will break bread again in ***Emmaus*** where he met the two disciples on the road. This was the moment when the two dispirited disciples recognized him in the breaking of the bread. And this is where we will recognize Christ in each other, under the tent as we celebrate as the ***Body*** (and Blood) ***of Christ*** after the “breaking of the bread.”