

CELEBRATE SABBATH

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

**Serenity within is created by the love you create for yourself,
and those around you.**

Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14-16

The author of Deuteronomy tells us that during the difficult days in the desert, God gave his people all the basic things they needed, bread and water in miraculous ways. He encourages us, his readers, to remember the Lord who kept his people safe from dangers and provided them with basic needs during their journey through the desert. He tells us that it was not just bread that God gave. God taught them that it was not on bread alone that man lived but “by every word that came from the mouth of God”.

The bread with which we are fed satisfies our physical hungers. The bread that God gives also takes the form of the living Word that nourishes the spirit and strengthens our will. To live by the Word of God means to be still, to listen, to change, to grow and to be transformed by the Word.

Psalms 147

Psalms 147 reflects the period when the descendants of those who stayed in Babylon or of those who had gone further away from home into Persia were slowly trickling back and were being welcomed home to Zion. They were glad to sing the praises of their redeemer God. This Psalm calls us to praise God because like the father who welcomed the prodigal son, God “gathers the outcasts of Israel, cares for all things in the universe, gives peace to His people and keeps them safe.

Verse 20 says “He has not done this for any other nation. God has singled out Israel and made a covenant – educated Israel with his Torah, brought her out of Exile, rebuilt her city and the temple that was the very presence of God. This itself is reason enough to simply “Praise the Lord”.

**Glorify the Lord, O Jerusalem;
Praise your God, O Zion.
For he has strengthened the bars of your gates;
He has blessed your children within you.**

I Corinthians 10:16-17

In this excerpt, Paul emphasizes the unique nature of participation in the Eucharist. He

describes the cup of blessing as a participation in the blood of Christ and the breaking and sharing of bread as a unifying force. The Eucharist creates and sustains the communion of all believers with Christ and with one another. We read about the Eucharist continuing to feed the hunger of the growing church. The community was created and nurtured by sharing the one bread and the one cup. Eating together was the sign of belonging to the community and the sign of responsibility for one another. The shared unity was valued, respected and protected by the community. The Eucharist also challenged them to feed each other and be mindful of the hunger of the less fortunate in the community.

This remembrance of Jesus in breaking the bread and sharing the cup continued to create a “connection”, a “communion”, a “fellowship”, an eternal bond with the Lord and with one another. The Eucharist created and sustained the Christian community.

John 6:51-58

“If you do not eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you do not have life in you” (v 53). The listeners of Jesus were shocked at the idea of eating the flesh and drinking the blood, which was too repulsive for them. The bread and the cup Jesus offered was not simply a sign of his desire to give or to share. Bread and wine became body and blood, the whole person, in total giving.

Just as God becomes fully present to us in Jesus, Jesus becomes fully present to us in the bread the wine of the Eucharist.

The Passover was designed to enable every Israelite to go through the drama of divinely directed freedom. The meal was shared in a reclining position, appropriate to the status of free men who had experienced a great liberation. The Last supper was different. Jesus said: “This piece of bread is my Body” - this piece of bread is my very self, no longer in type, but in reality. Therefore, when you eat it, you are no longer eating a symbol, a foreshadowing of a future reality. You are eating my very self.

To eat the flesh and to drink the blood of Jesus is to take in the whole person of Jesus....To take Jesus in and let him transform us. In this eating and drinking, we are brought into communion with Christ and with the whole body of Christ. The gift of Jesus as bread was and continues to be a challenge to all followers of Jesus. Eucharist is a sacred meal of communion, of togetherness, of thanksgiving, of sacrifice, of total giving. Eucharist is a life-altering, life-transforming gift.

The Eucharist is, therefore, the completion, the crowning, and the fulfillment of Christ’s love. Let Jesus in and let him transform you!

Saint of the Day June 7 - St. Willibald and 11 other saints are remembered this day

Willibald was born in Wessex on October 21, 700. His mother, Saint Wuna of Wessex, was reportedly a sister of Saint Boniface. His father, Saint Richard the Pilgrim, was a chieftain of Wessex. At the age of three, Willibald suffered from a violent illness. His parents prayed to God, vowing to commit Willibald to a monastic life if he was to be spared. Willibald survived and at the age of five entered the Benedictine monastery at Waldheim and was educated by Abbot Egwald. At the monastery he became accustomed to the Irish and Anglo-Saxon monastic ideal of peregrinatio religiosa, or pious rootlessness.

Willibald went on a pilgrimage to Rome with his father, who died on the way at Lucca, Italy. He continued on to Rome and then to Jerusalem. Captured by Saracens who thought him to be a spy, he was eventually released and continued on to all of the holy places and then to Constantinople, where he visited numerous monasteries and hermitages. Upon his return to Italy, he went to Monte Cassino where he stayed for ten years, serving as sacristan, dean, and porter. While on a visit to Rome, he met Pope St. Gregory III, who sent him to Germany to assist his cousin St. Boniface in his important missionary endeavors. Boniface ordained him a priest in 741 and soon appointed him bishop of Eichstatt, in Franconia. With his brother Winebald, he founded a double monastery at Heidenheim, naming Winebald abbot and his sister Walburga abbess. Willibald served as bishop for some four decades. He died of natural causes on July 7, 781 and was canonized by Pope Leo VII in 938

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs