

Celebrate the Body and Blood of Christ

In honor of the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Body and Blood of Christ, we offer you a tiny retreat based on the feast's Gospel. This retreat is especially for those who do not get *Sunday by Sunday*. Please feel free to pass the retreat on to a friend.

—Sisters of St. Joseph/Good Ground Press

To begin place yourself in the presence of Jesus:

Jesus, this is _____. I have been fed by you at the Eucharist for _____ years. This Sunday, June 6, is the day we celebrate your gift of the Eucharist. I begin by reading this story from Luke's Gospel.

Why don't you give them something to eat?

Narrator: Jesus spoke to the crowds of the reign of God, and he healed all who were in need of healing. As sunset approached, the twelve came to him.

Twelve: Dismiss the crowd so that they can go into the villages and farms in the neighborhood and find themselves lodging and food, for this is certainly an out-of-the-way place.

Jesus: Why don't you give them something to eat yourselves?

Twelve: We have nothing but five loaves and two fishes. Shall we go and buy food for all these people?

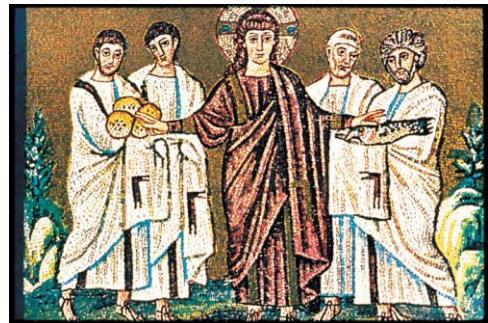
Narrator: There were about five thousand men.

Jesus: Have them sit down in groups of fifty or so.

Narrator: Jesus' disciples followed his instructions and got the people all seated. Then taking the five loaves and the two fishes, Jesus raised his eyes to heaven, pronounced a blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to his disciples for distribution to the crowd. They all ate until they had enough. What was left filled twelve baskets. —Luke 9.11-17

Jesus, you feed people who follow you hungry for healing, hungry for the words you speak, and hungry because it has been a long day. You feel compassion for them and tell your followers to feed them. When they say they have only a little food and little money to buy more, you —

- Take the food they offer you,
- Bless it, acknowledging it is a gift from God,
- Break it into pieces,
- Give it to your followers to distribute to the people.



This is what happens at our Eucharist today. We offer the bread and wine that is our lives. It becomes your body and blood to nourish us. As in your time, when we have all eaten there is plenty left over, plenty to share.

- How does celebrating Eucharist nourish me?
- How does Eucharist lead me to become nourishment for others?

A friend's mother told her that if she didn't stop eating so many chocolate-chip cookies, she was going to turn into one. The mother exaggerated about the cookies, but her example holds true for the Eucharist. When we gather at Eucharist, we remember how Jesus gave his whole self to us. We find the strength and courage to try this kind of self-giving ourselves. Because we gather together over and over, we remember over and over. We become more and more like Jesus. We become his real presence to our world.

- When have I experienced myself as Christ present in the world?
- How has God acted in me and through me to nourish others?

To conclude, make a prayer of thanks and praise for the many times you have received the Body of Christ. Remember the people who prepared you for this sacrament and those you have shared Eucharist with all these years. Conclude your retreat with the Alleluia verse from the feast day liturgy.

Alleluia, Alleluia! I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever (John 6.51). Alleluia!