



Bringing Home the Word

Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ May 29, 2016

Meal Blessings

By Janel Esker

When my twin nephews were three years old, they were heavily into dinosaurs. Once they revealed knowledge of dinosaur religious practices: “No! The tyrannosaurus can’t eat the triceratops until he says the blessing!” Their mother commented, “I guess some things are sinking in after all.”

Today’s readings are full of blessing words as we focus on the Body and Blood of Christ. Melchizedek blesses God and

Abram in Genesis; we hear St. Paul recall the Last Supper blessing and institution of the Eucharist; and in the Gospel, Jesus blesses the five loaves and two fish that miraculously become more than enough food for the people gathered.

We know we ought to follow the dinosaurs’ lead and pray a blessing before our daily meals, but how many of us remember? We’re often rushed to get food down before our next task or activity, and we take our meals for granted.

Might the same be said of our focus at Mass? Sure, we’re physically present as the blessing is prayed over the bread and wine, but are we actively participating in that prayer?

In the Gospel, the blessed food was distributed by the apostles to all who were hungry. The blessing, in a sense, was multiplied because Jesus’ followers carried it out.

We’re called to have that same multiplying effect in the world when we receive the Eucharist. As we let the Body and Blood “sink in” more deeply, our actions and attitudes can truly transform the world. †

Sunday Readings

Genesis 14:18–20

“Being a priest of God Most High, [Melchizedek] blessed Abram with these words...”

1 Corinthians 11:23–26

“Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said...”

Luke 9:11b–17

“Taking the five loaves and the two fish..., [Jesus] said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples...”

A Word From Pope Francis

We can meet [Jesus] in our time when we listen to his word and when we are uniquely close to him in the Eucharist....May Holy Mass never slip into a superficial routine for us! May we draw increasingly from its depths! It is Mass itself which integrates us into Christ’s immense work of salvation, which hones our spiritual vision so that we can perceive his love: his “prophecy in action.” With this he initiated in the Upper Room the gift of himself on the Cross, his definitive victory over sin and death, which we proudly and joyfully proclaim.



— Message at the National Eucharistic Congress of Germany, May 30, 2013

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How often do we share a family meal? How often do we attend Mass and receive the Eucharist?
- How do I educate and evangelize those around me in the faith?

Taking Your Family to Mass and Liking It

By Steve and Sue Givens

Besides the importance (and obligation) of Mass and the sanctity of Sunday, one of your key responsibilities as a Catholic parent is to educate and form your children in the Church. Children learn first by example, and God wants to help your children come to know and love him through you. Teaching your children about the gifts of salvation and life everlasting offers them hope and strength to persevere in spite of life's challenges.

While it's difficult to make a nine-month-old understand your expectations about their behavior, you can ensure your own. Commit to weekly attendance, to keeping your cool, and to prayerful participation. Prepare for Mass by looking inward. Ask God to give you strength, a joyful disposition, and the ability to cope with disruptions and fussy children. Patience is not only a virtue; it's a skill that takes conscious effort.

Toddlers and preschoolers

Mass is a time to learn about our faith, respect, and listening. They can begin to understand that something special is happening.

- Teach them to appreciate silence and stillness. Outside of church, practice being quiet and still. Say, "This is how we are in church."

- Arrive early and point out the objects, items, and decorations. Explain their purpose and symbolism.
- Sit where they can see what's going on.
- Have them emulate worship by genuflecting, standing, sitting, and kneeling. As they become older, you can teach them the reasons behind the things they do in church.
- Bring religious books and soft toys to keep them content. (Cars, balls, and keys roll, bounce, and make noise.)
- Emphasize the importance of your participation. Say, "I have to pray right now" or, "Father is talking."
- Introduce them to their faith and Church through art, music, and common prayers. Purchase books and recordings and use them outside of Mass.

These items are just as important in the "cry room," which is not a play area. Children old enough to sit, stand, kneel, and pay attention should do so just as if they were in the main church.

Grades 1–5

As children near their first Communion, Mass attendance needs to move beyond good behavior to active participation. They need to know what the Mass is and why it's important.

- Remind them that Mass is a weekly obligation. (They can remind you.)
- Help them follow along in the missalette. Teach them the "flow" of Mass. For younger ones, try purchasing an illustrated book about Mass.
- Quiz them after Mass to see what they remember. Make it fun—not a punishment—and praise them for good behavior and responses.

- Read the readings together before Mass, or discuss them and the homily afterward.
- Get them involved through participation in a children's liturgy, children's choir, and altar servers.

Grades 6–8

Adolescents develop opinions and identities. If they see Mass is important to you, they will at least be curious.

- Help them prepare for Mass by previewing the readings, doing an examination of conscience, going to reconciliation, and fasting.
- Continue the quizzes to reinforce the messages and themes. Let older siblings come up with questions for young ones.
- Discuss ideas of how to apply the readings to daily life. Encourage them to give examples of how Christian values are (and are not) present around them. †



PRAYER

Lord, you love me
and answer all my needs.
Help me to be less
self-focused in life
and more attentive to
the needs of others.

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 30–June 4

Mon: Weekday (9th week in Ordinary Time):
2 Peter 1:2–7 / Mark 12:1–12
Tue. Visitation of Blessed Virgin Mary:
Zephaniah 3:14–18a / Luke 1:39–56
Wed. St. Justin: 2 Timothy 1:1–3, 6–12 /
Mark 12:18–27

Thu. Weekday:
2 Timothy 2:8–15 / Mark 12:28–34
Fri. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus:
Ezekiel 34:11–16 / Romans 5:5b–11 /
Luke 15:3–7
Sat. Immaculate Heart of Blessed Virgin:
2 Timothy 4:1–8 / Luke 2:41–51

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