



Tuesday 11 June 2020

The feast of Corpus Christi is always celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. The Latin words mean 'body of Christ'. The festival is also called The Day of Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Communion.

In medieval times in many parts of Europe, Corpus Christi was a time when the annual mystery plays were performed. The most famous were in York and occurred for at least 200 years until the Protestant Reformers suppressed them in the sixteenth century.

- All Bible readings come from the *New Revised Standard Version*.
- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration have been included at the end rather than in situ because many following the service will be in isolation and unable to celebrate the sacrament.
- The hymn is a Youtube link. Please hover the mouse over the link, press Ctrl and then return.

HYMN **Bread of heaven**

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

You then, who truly and earnestly repent of your sins,
and are in love and charity with your neighbours,
and intend to lead a new life,
following the commandments of God,
and walking from this day forward in his holy ways:
draw near with faith,

and take this holy sacrament to your comfort;
and make your humble confession to almighty God.

All **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Gloria

This version of the Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All **Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.**

**Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.**

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for Corpus Christi

Lord Jesus Christ,
we thank you that in this wonderful sacrament
you have given us the memorial of your passion:
grant us so to reverence the sacred mysteries
of your body and blood
that we may know within ourselves
and show forth in our lives
the fruits of your redemption;
for you are alive and reign with the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the first book of Moses called Genesis

Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.' Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. *Genesis 14:18-20*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. *1 Cor 11:23-26*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said, 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' The Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'

Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.' *John 6:51-58*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Today, the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, is appointed as 'The Day of Thanksgiving for the Institution of the Holy Communion' or 'Corpus Christi'—literally the

'Body of Christ'. We often use the Greek word 'Eucharist' to describe occasions when we rehearse the giving and receiving of bread and wine as our Saviour commanded us in remembrance of Him, and the word itself means 'thanksgiving'. At the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer, we are invited (and agree) that we owe God our 'thanks and praise' ... thanks that Christ instituted a precious and lasting memorial of His death and passion so that we might have eternal life.

In the second reading we hear St Paul's account of the Eucharist. It is the earliest as it comes, chronologically, before the Gospel was written down. I want to extend that reading by a few sentences:

'Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves' (1 Cor 11:27–29).

What does Paul mean when he says: 'those who fail to discern the body'? Surely Paul is talking, not only about the 'bread', but about the 'body' in the sense of the 'body of Christ'—the Church by which he means all Christian people—us. Paul had identified that the Church in Corinth was in grave danger of separating into factions along social and class lines: one group had failed to 'discern' that another was just as much part of the 'one body'.

For us, therefore, the warning is that nothing less than a wholehearted commitment to the life and the unity of our community is essential as we seek to enter into 'holy communion' with God. The words of *The Book of Common Prayer* are most explicit in that we should only 'draw near' if we are 'in love and charity with our neighbours', and our neighbours in the sense that we cannot be indifferent to the hunger and thirst of millions of our brothers and sisters at home and around the world if we wish to eat and drink the sacrament. If we do not prepare our hearts in full awareness of our commitment to being the one body of Christ, then perhaps, as Paul writes, we eat and drink judgment upon ourselves, and Jesus will be betrayed at our communion table just as He was at that first table in the upper room.

What is on offer to us as we approach that table is precious, life-changing and life-giving.

'Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life,' says Jesus in our gospel reading and, even though there is no account of the Institution of the Eucharist in John's Gospel, some say the whole of Chapter 6 is one extended Eucharistic commentary.

Jesus began the Chapter with five thousand people crowded around Him and He fed them (John 6:1–14). By the end of the chapter, all but a few remain. (John 6:66)

‘Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you’ (John 6:53).

‘This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?’ they ask. (John 6:60).

‘Does this offend you?’ asks Jesus. (John 6:61)

Yes: the flesh, the blood, the carnal reality of a broken body on the cross, does offend but what does it all mean?

‘It means this,’ He replies, and (in the synoptic gospels) He takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and shares it.

The bread and the wine that are brought to the altar are the work of human hands ... our labour. They are symbols not only of Christ, but of us ... our bodies. The priest, in the place of Christ, takes them (takes us), gives thanks (gives ‘Eucharist’), breaks the bread (breaks us), and thereby incorporates us into His broken body. That same body, now ‘Though Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,’ is shared with the body of Christ ... the Church ... for: ‘Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.’

Failure to recognise the body in all senses—corporate, corporal and corporeal—is perilous, says St Paul.

In this holy meal is contained the fulness of all that God in Christ has done for us. And we know that the invitation to ‘do this in remembrance’ of Him, again and again, is the one command of Christ we cannot refuse if we are to be true to our calling to be the body of Christ ... the Corpus Christi. Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Lord, listen to the prayers of your people,
gathered at your table.

In faith we pray:

All we pray to you our God.

Here, where we celebrate how Christ gave us his body
to be our spiritual food,

listen as we pray for his body the Church,
spread throughout the world ...

In faith we pray:

All we pray to you our God.

Here, where we recognize the presence of Christ,
who takes away the sin of the world,
listen as we pray for that world
and for its peoples for whom his blood was shed ...
In faith we pray:

All we pray to you our God.

Here, where we come together as Christ gathered with his friends
to give us this meal of holy fellowship,
listen as we pray for all whom you have given us,
our friends and all whose lives are joined with ours ...
In faith we pray:

All we pray to you our God.

Here, where we remember the night of Christ's agony and trial,
listen as we pray for all who share his sufferings
through fear or pain or distress of many kinds ...
In faith we pray:

All we pray to you our God.

Here, where we join our praises with the whole company of heaven,
listen as we pray for all who have trusted Christ's promise
to raise up on the last day those who eat his flesh and
drink his blood ...
In faith we pray:

All we pray to you our God.

Lord, satisfy our hunger with the food that lasts,
the bread of God which comes down from heaven
and gives life to the world,
Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

All we pray to you our God.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

We are the Body of Christ.

In the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body.

Let us then pursue all that makes for peace
and builds up our common life.

The peace of the Lord be always with you:

All And also with you.

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him.

He had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. *Luke 24:31a,35*

May the Father,
who fed his children with manna in the wilderness,
strengthen you in your pilgrimage to the Promised Land.

All Amen.

May the Son,
who gave his flesh for food and his blood for drink,
keep you in eternal life and raise you up on the last day.

All Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
who leads us into all truth,
help you discern the Lord's body
and empower you to proclaim his death until he comes.

All Amen

and the blessing of God the Almighty.
father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and good,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks and praise,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ our great high priest.
He offered himself to you as the Lamb without blemish,
the acceptable gift that gives you perfect praise.
At the Last Supper, seated with his apostles,
he left this memorial of his passion
to bring us its saving power until the end of time.
In this great sacrament you feed your people
and strengthen them in holiness,
so that throughout the world the human family
may be enlightened by one faith
and drawn together in one communion of love.
We come to this foretaste of your heavenly banquet
to be transformed by your grace
and restored in the image and likeness of the risen Christ.
Therefore earth unites with heaven
to sing a new song of praise;
we too join with angels and archangels
as they proclaim your glory without end:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms

and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

All **Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink

in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All **We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,**

**and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.**

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

All praise to you, our God and Father,
for you have fed us with the bread of heaven
and quenched our thirst from the true vine:
hear our prayer that, being grafted into Christ,
and feast with him in his kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

**All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.**