

## OPENING SECTION

What is staying with you from last week?

Opening prayer

I pray not only for these but also for those who through their word will believe in me. May they be one as you Father are in me and I am in you. May they be one in us; so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you have given me that they may be one as we are one. I in them and you in me. Thus shall they reach perfection in unity and the world shall know that you have sent me and that I have loved them just as you have loved me. John 17 20-23



## THIS IS MY BODY

*At home with Jesus in the Eucharist.*

*In this session we appreciate Eucharist as a sharing and an expression of Christ's relationship with the Father and Spirit. We recognise the table to which we are invited and see it as an invitation to share in the love of the Trinity.*

*We reflect on the Mass as Christ's action, Christ's prayer and explore how we might connect those words and actions with the words and actions of our daily lives and so see the Christ who offers himself in love to the Father as the Christ who offers himself in love in our homes; loving through us with us and in us.*

### INPUT

This evening we reflect upon not just this priestly prayer of Christ but Eucharist as the prayer of Christ and the invitation to unity. It is an invitation and a unity we see depicted in Rublev's icon of the Trinity. The space at the front of the table remains empty; it is a space we are each invited to fill in our own unique response to God's offer of relationship, offer of union with Father Son and Holy Spirit. The entire Eucharist is a gesture of placing ourselves at that table, of entering into that relationship, that union, of love.

Difficulty with the icon, as with the invitation: no matter how beautiful it may seem it is a challenge to believe that it is directed at me. The icon resembles someone else's family photographs. Interesting enough but boring because I'm not in them. How can we see ourselves in this icon of the Trinity? How can we see ourselves in the celebration of the Eucharist and so recognise the invitation of the icon as the invitation to come home, to be at home with Father, Son and Spirit?

This evening will help us to insert ourselves into that "family" photo of the Trinity, or perhaps simply to affirm a place we know ourselves already to occupy at the table. . . to hear Christ's invitation to join him in Eucharist and in every aspect of our lives as personally addressed to each one, to join him in his prayer of the Eucharist and to make of it our own.



My photo album . . . this is your life. Put together by my mother as a Christmas gift on my first Christmas as a married woman. Gathers together memories. Gather memories yourself now, not of a lifetime but of the past week: bring to mind snapshots of what happened.



There's a place in this Mass where we could say those snapshots of the past week are important. In the opening prayer of the Mass Jesus is gathering our stories, looking with us through the "album", The open armed gesture of the priest shows us what Christ is doing: opening to receive our lives,

opening to offer them in prayer to the Father. He is praying with us and for us: *let us pray* is not an attempt to waken Christ up. It is rushed, squeezed into the middle of so many words. Can we slow it down by coming early to Mass and taking out in our minds the week's album? This means that when it comes to Let us Pray, we know the lives we bring to Eucharist, we know the lives we bring to Christ for him to share with the Father.

What do you think? What strikes you as you listen?

PAUSE FOR  
FEEDBACK

The Christ who prays with and for us is the Christ we encounter in the gospel. This Christ is active in his word; what he was doing then, he is doing now. One of the best gospels for appreciating what Christ is doing in the Eucharist is that of the Feeding of the 5000.

Listen. Place yourself at the scene. Notice. What is Jesus doing?

*The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."*

*So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.*

*By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But*

he answered, "You give them something to eat yourselves." They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."



Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

What is Jesus doing? Write a list of doing words . . . all ended in -ING to keep it simple.



Egs: teaching, gathering feeding, leading, loving, sharing, empowering, challenging, blessing, transforming,

Compare with the Mass and identify the actions of Christ at the various stages of our Eucharist. Mass as a participation in those actions.

## GOD WITH SKIN BODY OF CHRIST

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Story of boy in thunderstorm. Scared. God is all around, but right now I need a God with skin.

God with skin, Body of Christ.

The prayer of the Eucharist, Jesus concern for others, his invitation to join him in loving union, does not stop at the end of Eucharist. What he is doing then, he is doing now with us through us, in us. United with him, in his Body, we continue to be his loving actions in the world, in our world in our way.



Where do you see the actions of this gospel in others . . . in yourself.

SMALL  
GROUPS

These actions are celebrated and acknowledged in the Mass but in symbolism that has over the years lost its power. Bread and wine, symbols of creation are brought to the altar not only for transformation into the Body and blood of Christ but also as symbols of our daily lives. Our acts of loving kindness, small and large, are brought to Christ so that he might join them in his offering of himself to the Father. Small kindness become someone much greater because they are united with him complete gift of himself.

## NOT THERE YET

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All of this may leave us feeling a bit inadequate. We are Christ's Body! Yet it is a broken Body; we are all too aware of that. The Eucharist once again helps. Not only does it celebrate all that Christ is doing with, through and in us in the world, it is there for Christ to nourish and transform us through his presence to us, in Word, in Bread and Blood and in each other. We are being transformed into something . . . into someone. As Augustine affirmed in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, we are becoming what we received . . . The Body of Christ.

And so when we go to receive the host as communion time, not only does our AMEN affirm the Christ we receive, but it also affirms our identity in Christ. We are Body of Christ : AMEN.

*For as it is with the human body, which is a unity although it has many parts – all the parts, though many, still making up one single Body –so it is with Christ We were baptised into one body in a single Spirit . .  
.Now Christ’s body is yourselves,  
each of you a part to play in the whole.*

1 Cor 12: 12, 13a, 27

We have, through our baptism, been united with Christ. The same Christ, living in us, working through us, gathers us so that, together, we form the Body of Christ. Christ says to each one of us: “I have chosen you”. He asks each one of us to be our own unique part of his Body: his hands, his feet, his mouth, his ears, his heart.

Look for a moment at your own hands. Perhaps cup them as you would when receiving the gift of Christ’s Body during Eucharist.



See before you the hands of the Body of Christ: God’s love made flesh

Yours are the hands that Christ  
will fold in prayer for others  
Yours are the hands that Christ  
will use to comfort others  
Yours are the hands that Christ  
will put at the service of others  
Yours are the hands that will receive  
the Body of Christ so that you can become  
more and more like the Christ you bring to others.

Lift your cupped hands before you. Offer them to God. Know that these hands have been specially chosen to touch the people in your part of your world. Trust that the God living in you will, with your cooperation, bring to fruition within you everything you need to use these hands and become the wonderful person he created you to be. He will be with you always. Loving you; Loving through you.

Bless the hands we hold out before you. May they always be open to receiving your immense love. May we use them to share that love with others so that they might experience through us the loving presence of our tender compassionate God.