

The Living Bread

The Solemnity of the Most Holy
Body and Blood of Christ
Cycle A | June 7, 2026

WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

I remember when my best friend was killed. He was only 16 years old. I remember seeing him on the floor with blood all over him, the crime scene taped off, his family arriving when they heard the news, and how his death made them grieve and suffer. I remember I cried that night and prayed for his family. I remember wanting revenge as I let anger overwhelm me. At the time, I had no coping tools to deal with these types of emotions. I was blinded by hate, pain, and grief, and never considered possible consequences. I drank to numb the pain and dull my senses, which resulted in me making poor decisions.

As I look back, I shake my head because now, whenever I am faced with a bad situation and feel overwhelmed, unsure, or out of balance about how to react, I turn to God for help and direction by praying and meditating. I have learned to keep my anger in check, consider the consequences of every choice I make, and avoid conflicts. I place my trust in God to help me make the right choices and forgive even those I dislike.

Even in my most vulnerable moments, I have gotten through it by relying on and trusting in God to give me the strength and confidence to overcome difficult situations. My faith is strong, and God has made me more confident in making important decisions when it comes to friends, family, and being able to see the light in the darkness of times.

- Steven, who is in a California State Prison.



PENITENTIAL RITE

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Jesus,

You are the living bread.

Through your body and blood, we ask that you nourish our lives and our faith in you. Help us to always be open to the hope and forgiveness that comes from your heart.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. R. Amen.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a

Moses said to the people: "Remember how for forty years now the LORD, your God, has directed all your journeying in the desert, so as to test you by affliction and find out whether or not it was your intention to keep his commandments. He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your fathers, in order to show you that not by bread alone does one live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the LORD. "Do not forget the LORD, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery; who guided you through the vast and terrible desert with its saraph serpents and scorpions, its parched and waterless ground; who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock and fed you in the desert with manna, a food unknown to your fathers."

The Word of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

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.

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

He has granted peace in your borders;
with the best of wheat he fills you.
He sends forth his command to the earth;
swiftly runs his word!

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

He has proclaimed his word to Jacob,
his statutes and his ordinances to Israel.
He has not done thus for any other nation;
his ordinances he has not made known to them. Alleluia.

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

Brothers and sisters: The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

The Word of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.

Gospel: John 6:51-58

Jesus said to the Jewish crowds: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever."

The Gospel of the Lord.
R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



MEDITATION: REAL FOOD

javier wakes up at 4:00 am
every day
to begin his work
the heavy beams
to build the houses
needed to be lifted high
all morning until noon
he would be sweating
with the heavy labor
javier enjoyed his work
he felt good using his body
under difficult conditions
but sometimes
he felt challenged
by the impossibility
of completing a task

before he left for work
every day
his wife maria would rise
and make a healthy breakfast
without this breakfast
he would be lost

once there was
a period of time
when maria went to
visit her mother
who was sick in mexico
the first day at work
javier had suffered
because he had not
eaten enough

every morning
the food at breakfast
had given him strength
to complete his tasks
it gave him stamina
when the building
seemed impossible

javier was remembering
how his brother had been
killed by a drunk driver
he had carried hate
around in his heart

javier knew
he wanted revenge
on the person who killed
his younger brother
he deserved to die

day and night
this revenge ruled
javier's being
when he went to sleep
when he woke up
in the morning
this was the first thought
on his mind
his grandmother was
always begging him
to go to church with her
and on one of her birthdays
he reluctantly went with her
early in the morning
she pushed javier
into the line for confession
he went for her sake

it was time for communion
he put out his hand
for the body of christ
receiving into his being
the body of christ
he returned to his seat
sat down and
closed his eyes
a strange feeling
began to take place
seemed like it lasted
forever

this food had shifted
something within javier
he saw so clearly
how this hate and
revenge was
destroying him

he was being healed
on the deepest level possible

he had not expected
anything like
this experience
when he went
to communion

javier knew
he didn't want to be
destroyed by his hate
by his revenge
we would need this food
just like he needed
his huge breakfasts
in the morning

this need for real food
was no different
than his desperate need
for his breakfast
to give him strength

after some weeks
of going to church
with his grandmother
javier understood deeply
he needed this food of god
to give him strength
not to be like
everyone else
but rather someone
who wanted to live
not die
not get locked up
in self-pity

on these sundays
javier knew
this experience
of the eucharist
was saving his life
just like the nourishment
in the morning
was saving him from
falling under the weight
of the construction work

two years later

on the feast of
corpus christi
javier told
his grandmother
he wanted to hold
one of the candles
in the procession

javier told her
how grateful he was
tears running down
his face saying
i know nothing will
ever bring back
my brother again
i miss him
every day of my life
but this hate
was ruining my life
for so long
i wanted revenge
until i was fed
this food of god
christ's body and blood

how foolish i was
never to have
known this before
i want to hold one
of the candles
during the procession

i pray that my friends
who are seeking revenge
will also wake up
and be fed
this healing food
this nourishing food

javier's grandmother
also with tears
in her eyes
embraced javier



REFLECTION: I remember a time when I was angry and found it hard to forgive someone who hurt me... I remember... I remember...

OUR FATHER

Let us pray with confidence to the Father
in the words our Savior gave us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

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

SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you
peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our
sins, but on the faith of your Church, and
grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom
where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
R. And with your spirit.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Grant us peace.

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away
the sins of the world. Happy are we who are called
to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter
under my roof, but only say the word and my
soul shall be healed.**

COMMUNION

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord,
Through your body broken on the cross, you
brought us the hope of new life. Your forgiveness
was more powerful than anger or the need for
revenge. Guide us in your ways so that we may
find life rather than death.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

