

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ



The Twelve Steps of addiction recovery and the sacraments of the Catholic Church are rooted in the reality of God's presence with us. While each of the steps and the sacraments have great ritual and reverence around them regarding initiation, they are to be continually practiced. Practicing these principles in all our affairs comes in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This Sunday the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. The Gospel Reading is taken from the fourteenth Chapter of Mark's Gospel:

*While they were eating,
he took bread, said the blessing,
broke it, gave it to them, and said,
"Take it; this is my body."
Then he took a cup, gave thanks,
and gave it to them, and they all drank from it.
He said to them,
"This is my blood of the covenant,
which will be shed for many.*

The source of our eternal life is found in Jesus. We are given a tangible way to physically remain in his flesh and, as we recover from the family spiritual disease of addiction, we begin to appreciate our participation in this grace-filled sacrament when we receive the Eucharist. We might also come to realize that we are capable of persevering more than we thought.

Step Ten gives us the tools to stay active in the grace we receive through the Eucharist by "continuing to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it." There is a spiritual principle of perseverance woven within this step that can be found when we continue to seek union with God. We remain humble, admit our powerlessness over addiction, take an honest inventory, share it with God and another human being, ask Him to remove our shortcomings, and make amends when it will bring healing and justice to situations we've harmed.

This may sound like a lifestyle that is unreachable. Perseverance does not come on our own self-will. Remember, you are not alone and will find the necessary support from the strength of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and the group of individuals you find walking a similar journey. Even if you have not yet approached this stage of the Twelve Steps, there is still a lot of spiritual wisdom found in discussing these principles.

Diving further into the mystery of the Eucharist in his encyclical letter *The Church of the Eucharist*, Pope John Paul II exclaims:

“The Eucharistic sacrifice is the source and summit of the Christian life. For the most holy Eucharist contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth: Christ himself, our passover and living bread. Through his own flesh, now made living and life-giving by the Holy Spirit, he offers life to men. Consequently the gaze of the Church is constantly turned to her Lord, present in the Sacrament of the Altar, in which she discovers the full manifestation of his boundless love.”

His letter continues: "To contemplate Christ involves being able to recognize him wherever he manifests himself, in his many forms of presence, but above all in the living sacrament of his body and his blood. The Church draws her life from Christ in the Eucharist; by him she is fed and by him she is enlightened. The Eucharist is both a mystery of faith and a 'mystery of light'. Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the faithful can in some way relive the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: 'their eyes were opened and they recognized him' (Luke 24:31)."

Let us come together in the name of Jesus Christ and find unity in His Body and Blood, praying for the willingness to overcome fear and doubt. When we unite at the Eucharistic banquet, we recognize the great sacrifice of our Lord and share a common solution to the devastating effects of addiction, one day at a time.

Reflection Questions

- Consider and describe a time when you have persevered through a personal challenge in recovery.
- What kind of strength do you find in the Eucharist?
 - Can you relate to the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus whose eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus?
- What experience, strength, and hope do you have to share today?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Exodus 24:3-8

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 116:12-13, 15-16, 17-18

Second Reading: Hebrews 9:11-15

Gospel: Mark 14:12-16, 22-26