

## **Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Year C, Catechist**

Submitted by lectionaryadmin on Wed, 03/30/2016 - 20:00

### **Catechist Background and Preparation**

To prepare for the session, read all the readings.

Genesis 14:18-20

Psalm 110:1, 2, 3, 4

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Luke 9:11b-17

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading which appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

### **The Word In Liturgy**

The origins and even the purpose of the narrative in Genesis about Melchizedek are shrouded in mystery. Scholars speculate that the author of Genesis may have used this ancient tradition of David's ancestor, Abraham, meeting the priest-king associated with Jerusalem ("king of Salem") in order to legitimize the Davidic dynasty centered in Jerusalem. The Israelites would have considered the blessing of victory over enemies that is bestowed on Abram in this passage to have been passed down to all subsequent rulers on the throne of David. The significance of the bread and wine that is offered is most likely connected to Abraham's covenant with the Lord, but its exact relevance cannot be determined. The Roman Canon's allusion to "the bread and wine offered by your priest Melchizedek" is a witness to how early Christians understood this scene as a foreshadowing of the eucharistic mystery.

The multiplication of the loaves and fishes is the only miracle found in all four Gospels. Its eucharistic significance is clear from the precise and consistent language that is used in all of the Gospels ("taking . . . raised his eyes . . . pronounced a blessing . . . broke . . . gave"). The miracle would have reminded Jesus' contemporaries of a similar story in 2 Kings of Elisha and would have been perceived in a messianic context. The abundance of the leftovers was a sign of the lavish abundance of the messianic banquet. And, the prediction of the passion which Luke places immediately after this narrative occurs in all of the Gospels as a correction to the disciples' misunderstanding of the nature of Jesus' messiahship.

### **Catholic Doctrine**

#### ***The Real Presence***

On this feast when the Church contemplates the eucharistic banquet of the Lord, we proclaim our belief that "when we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory." (Roman Missal, Memorial Acclamation, Eucharistic Prayer) As followers of Jesus, we carry out his command to "do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 1:24-25). What we remember is the sacrifice of the Lord, which in the Eucharist we offer again to the Father through the gifts of bread and wine through the power of the Holy Spirit and the words of Christ.

The assembly gathers in faith, and God makes present Jesus, his body and blood, in the sacred



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species, the bread and wine offered in the Eucharist. This sacrament is “the source and summit of the Christian life.” It is a memorial of Jesus’ death and resurrection, a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet “in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.”

The emphatic proclamation of this awesome mystery is only possible because from the earliest times the Church has experienced in this sacred meal the real presence of Jesus Christ. This means that when we eat this bread and drink this cup although we taste the fruits of the earth and our human hands (bread and wine) we experience in faith the body and blood of our Lord and Savior who sacrificed himself on our behalf.

We believe that when the Church gathers, Mass is celebrated with the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and within the Eucharist, bread and wine are presented and prayed over, the Spirit of God descends and makes those elements into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The Church has insisted from the earliest times that this is the “real presence” of Christ, that is, real in the fullest sense a substantial presence by which Christ, both God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present. Why? Most especially because Jesus himself promised this and secondarily because the apostles and those who have followed in this Church have experienced it to be so.

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