

First reading Genesis 14:18-20

He offered bread and wine.

In those days: Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High. And he blessed Abram and said, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Responsorial Psalm 110(109):1-4 R4bc

You are a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchizedek.

The Lord's revelation to my lord:
'Sit at my right hand,
until I make your foes your footstool.'

The Lord will send from Sion
your sceptre of power:
rule in the midst of your foes.

With you is princely rule
on the day of your power.
In holy splendour, from the womb before the dawn,
I have begotten you.

The Lord has sworn an oath he will not change:
'You are a priest for ever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.'

Second reading 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

'For as often as you eat and drink, you proclaim the Lord's death.'

Brothers and Sisters: I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you; that the Lord Jesus on the night when 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 also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Sequence

Lauda, Sion

The shorter form of the sequence.

Angels' bread made pilgrims' feeding
truly bread for children's eating,
to dogs not to be offered.

Signed by Isaac on the altar,
by the lamb and paschal supper,
and in the manna figured.
Jesu, food and feeder of us,
here with mercy feed and friend us,
then grant in heaven felicity.

Lord of all, who here do feed us,
heav'nly guests, heirs, fellows make us,
in eternal company.

Amen. Alleluia.

St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), translated by St Robert Southwell (c.1561-1595)

Gospel Acclamation John 6:51

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever. **Alleluia.**

Gospel Luke 9:11b-17

All ate and were satisfied.

At that time: Jesus spoke to the crowd of the kingdom of God and cured those who needed healing. Now the day began to wear away, and the Twelve came and said to him, 'Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place.' But he said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' They said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish — unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.' For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, 'Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each.' And they did so, and made them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

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Feast Days this week

Monday 23rd June: St Etheldreda

Tuesday 24th June: The Nativity of John the Baptist

Friday 27th June: The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Saturday 28th June: The Immaculate Heart of Mary

The Cycle of Prayer

Those Who Suffer Persecution, Oppression and Denial of Human Rights

Background

The intention is inspired by the Feast of St John Fisher and St Thomas More (22 June).

Prayer

*O God, who in your inscrutable providence
will that the Church be united
to the sufferings of your Son,
grant, we pray, to your faithful
who suffer for your name's sake
a spirit of patience and charity,
that they may be found true and faithful witnesses
to the promises you have made.*

Roman Missal

The table of fellowship

Sitting together for a meal can generate a special feeling of togetherness. Each of us will have our own memories of table companionship or fellowship. Many of these will be happy experiences of celebration and laughter, of love received and shared. Some memories of table fellowship may be sad, times when we were more aware of one who was absent than of those who were present. Jesus shared table many times with his disciples. It is likely that, when sharing food with his disciples, he also shared with them his vision of God's kingdom. At table, the disciples imbibed something of Jesus' mind and heart and spirit. Of all the meals he shared with them, the meal that stayed in their memory more than any other was their last meal together, what came to be known as the last supper. Today's gospel gives us Mark's account, his word-picture, of that last supper.

This last meal Jesus shared with his disciples stood out in their memory, capturing the imagination of generations of disciples right up to ourselves. He did more than share his vision with the disciples; he gave them himself in a way he had never done before, and in a way that anticipated the death he would die for them and for all, on the following day. In giving himself in the form of the bread and wine of the meal, he was declaring himself to be their food and drink. In calling on them to take and eat, to take and drink, he was asking them to take their stand with him, to give themselves to him as he was giving himself to them.

It was because of that supper and of what went on there that we are here in this church today. Jesus intended his last supper to be a beginning rather than an end. It was the first Eucharist. Ever since that meal, the church has gathered regularly in his name, to do and say what he did and said at that last supper — taking bread and wine, blessing both, breaking the bread and giving both for disciples to eat and drink.

Jesus continues to give himself as food and drink to his followers. He also continues to put it up to his followers to take their stand with him, to take in all he stands for, living by his values, walking in his way, even if that means the cross. Whenever we come to Mass and receive the Eucharist, we are making a number of important statements. We are acknowledging Jesus as our bread of life, as the one who alone can satisfy our deepest hungers. We are also declaring that we will throw in our lot with him, as it were, that we will follow in his way and be faithful to him all our lives, in response to his faithfulness to us. In that sense, celebrating the Eucharist is not something we do lightly. Our familiarity with the Mass and the frequency with which we celebrate it can dull our senses to the full significance of what we are doing. Every time we gather for the Eucharist, we find ourselves once more in that upper room with the first disciples, and the last supper with all it signified is present again to us.

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Prayer for Pope Leo XIV

Lord of life, love and hope, we thank you for the election of our new Pope.

Watch over, protect and bless Pope Leo XIV

We pray that, led by the Holy Spirit, his faithful witness will be a beacon of hope in our fragile and often divided world.

May the joy of the Gospel inspire him with compassionate understanding so that, together, we can be peacemakers and life-givers.

May Pope Leo be a good and courageous shepherd, concerned for “the least, the last and the lost” of “every tribe and tongue and people and nation”. Guide him to be a leader after your own heart, which is more loving than we can possibly imagine.

We ask you, Lord, to surround Pope Leo with people of pastoral wisdom as he adjusts to his new role. Fill him with confidence in the power of prayer. Help us to help him.

Amen.