

Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. Yr. B. 1-2 June 2024.

Our bodies are vulnerable and frail. Without too much trouble they break and they bleed. We say that the Church, and for that matter our own Parish, is the body of Christ. This means that our faith community is prone to being hurt, broken and to bleeding. After all Christ's body was hurt, broken and bled by our insults, betrayals, malice and rejection, finally to be left hanging on his Cross. It's this human vulnerability that makes it possible for us to be united with the Lord. Were we above such injuries and sufferings we'd find ourselves quite beyond the reach of the healing and saving grace of Christ, left cold and isolated.

There would be no Eucharist were it not for the Church community just as there could have been no last supper were it not for Jesus gathering his followers to share in it. It's also true is that there could be no Church were it not for the Lord continually and faithfully giving himself for us. Without his self-gift we would long ago have lost our way, disintegrating and dissolving into the pages of history as so many other beliefs and groups have done. It is Jesus vulnerability and generosity in fully sharing our humanity that keeps us together, joining us to himself and his way to life.

St. Mark ended his gospel today by saying that after the last supper Jesus and his disciples left the room going down a valley and then up the Mount of Olives to the garden for Gethsemane. This was the beginning of Jesus final journey and of theirs, too, a slow, painful walk into the depths of human frailty and vulnerability. What the supper meant was now to be acted out in ways unmistakable, his body broken on rough, barren wood and his blood poured out onto the dry, thirsty ground. The disciples, too,

would be broken, shattered and scattered by witnessing the shock and scandal of the Cross. There seemed no way that this could end well.

Yet, it did end well in ways God foresaw but that we frail humans couldn't. Jesus had said to them that he wouldn't drink any more wine until he drank the new wine in the Kingdom of God. If they'd heard this at all it must have seemed otherworldly and very far away that Thursday night and throughout the suffering of Friday, what's become our Good Friday. Only later on when they'd regrouped and then encountered Jesus alive would they begin to grasp what he'd meant and what their supper, our first Eucharist, was all about.

Likewise, when we accept our vulnerability and frailty as Jesus did we then come to feel the real presence of Jesus offering himself to us. Only when we break and bleed a bit are we able to know the Crucified Christ living in us and recognise him in those we serve. For without some breaking and bleeding together we'll never be changed, nor can we grow as God desires. Yet, here above anywhere else, we recall that the aim of our faith is that we want to be utterly changed until we resemble the body and blood of Christ, the very person and spirit were celebrating and will soon receive as his brothers and sisters united around his holy table.