

# Jesus, 'bread of life,' stays with us

**E**ASTER SHINES so brightly, its afterglow fades as slowly as the glorious twilight of a setting sun. Pentecost Sunday ends the 50 days of Easter, but the Sundays of the Holy Trinity and the Body and Blood of Christ keep the memory of the mystery.

On the weekdays after Pentecost, we've already returned to the green vestments of Ordinary Time, but Sunday churchgoers might remain unaware that the Easter season has ended.

The Holy Trinity and the Body and Blood of Christ were feasts created during the Middle Ages. Popular piety demanded more occasions to reflect on the central beliefs of our faith — the existence of God, the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the loving heart of Jesus. The Church approved the feasts of Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi, and the Sacred Heart. We still celebrate the Sacred Heart on the Friday following the other two feasts. Corpus Christi originally fell on a Thursday, in commemoration of the Last Supper. Countries which honor this feast as a holyday of obligation (Italy, for example) keep the celebration on a Thursday. We join those countries that have transferred the feast to a Sunday.

Fr. Paul Turner



the  
**Good News**  
God's word in  
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ings of Jesus have been handed down to us like treasured heirlooms from the ancestry of our faith.

In the Gospel for Trinity Sunday (John 3:16-18), Jesus converses with Nicodemus, a Pharisee and leader of the Jews who came to the master by night. We detect some embarrassment in his approach, as if he doesn't want anyone to know he is flirting with discipleship. To this cautious questioner Jesus reveals the mysterious mission of the Son. God sent the Son into the world out of love. How much this passage acclaims: That there is a God, that he loves the world, that he sent the Son into the world, that the Son redeems us, and that faith accompanies our salvation. This passage affords us a beautiful meditation for next Sunday's feast. To thirsty believers whose nettlesome questions about God have been brushed off by tongue-tied catechists muttering, "It's a mystery," this teaching of Jesus pours cool refreshment. Who is God? A loving savior.

**T**HE GOSPEL for the Body and Blood of Christ (John 6:51-59) draws from the magnificent discourse in which Jesus reveals himself as the bread of life. Not only has he come into the world to save us, but he has also found a way to remain with us always, providing lifelong refreshment in the Eucharist. This teaching sounded strange to Jesus' listeners. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they wonder. At the end, many of them will turn away, since they cannot accept this mystery. Belief in the Eucharist separates believers from doubters.

The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is a central doctrine in our Catholic faith. Our Eucharistic belief finds its certitude in passages like this one. Jesus proclaims that he is the bread of life and that those who eat and drink his flesh and blood will live in him. The Body and Blood of Christ celebrates the meal which binds us together as Catholics and symbolizes our unity.

The afterglow of Easter lingers on. After professing our faith in the resurrection and celebrating our strength in Pentecost, we sum up what we believe in these two Sundays. We have a mighty God who does not remain aloof, but comes in love for our salvation, disguised as simple food. □

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**T**HE ORIGINAL TITLE, "Corpus Christi" ("the Body of Christ"), came not from a great devotion to Texas, but from devotion to the Eucharist. The faithful of the Middle Ages were receiving communion under the form of bread alone, the Body of Christ. (The city in Texas, obviously, was named after the feast.) Another feast, for the Blood of Christ, was suppressed in the 1969 calendar revision so we could have one feast of the Eucharist, now called the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Gospels for these two Sundays are texts we know well. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them." These say-

## Daily Scripture Readings

### Pentecost Sunday Sunday, May 26

Acts 2:1-11  
Psalms 104:1, 24, 29-31, 34  
1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13  
John 20:19-23

### Monday, May 27

1 Peter 1:3-9  
Psalms 111:1-2, 5-6, 9-10  
Mark 10:17-27

### Tuesday, May 28

1 Peter 1:10-16  
Psalms 98:1-4  
Mark 10:28-31

### Wednesday, May 29

1 Peter 1:18-25  
Psalms 147:12-15, 19-20  
Mark 10:32-45

### Thursday, May 30

1 Peter 2:2-5, 9-12  
Psalms 100:2-5  
Mark 10:46-52

### Friday, May 31

Zephaniah 3:14-18  
(Ps) Isaiah 12:2-3, 4b-6  
Luke 1:39-56

### Saturday, June 1

Jude 17:20b-25  
Psalms 63:2-6  
Mark 11:27-33

### Holy Trinity Sunday Sunday, June 2

Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9  
(Ps) Daniel 3:52-56  
2 Corinthians 13:11-13  
John 3:16-18

### Monday, June 3

2 Peter 1:2-7  
Psalms 91:1-2, 14-16  
Mark 12:1-12

### Tuesday, June 4

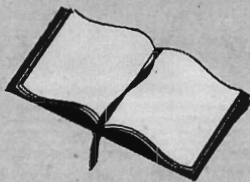
2 Peter 3:12-15a, 17-18  
Psalms 90:2-4, 10  
Mark 12:13-17

### Wednesday, June 5

2 Timothy 1:1-3, 6-12  
Psalms 123:1-2  
Mark 12:18-27

### Thursday, June 6

2 Timothy 2:8-15



Psalms 25:4-5, 8-10, 14  
Mark 12:28-34

### Friday, June 7

2 Timothy 3:10-17  
Psalms 119:157, 160-161,  
165-166, 168  
Mark 12:35-37

### Saturday, June 8

2 Timothy 4:1-8  
Psalms 71:8-9, 14-17, 22  
Mark 12:38-44

### Sunday, June 9

**Corpus Christi**  
Deuteronomy 8:2-3,  
14b-16a  
Psalms 147:12-15, 19-20  
1 Corinthians 10:16-17  
John 6:51-58