

## Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Ingredients give life to any great tasting food or drink. You can eat the same menu at different tables or on different days, and if one tastes better than the other, it's probably the ingredients. During the summer, fruits and vegetables fresh from the garden, passed through the kitchen, and set on the table make some of the finest food of the year. And whenever you get bread right from the oven onto your plate, it's the best.

Psalm 147 invites the people of Jerusalem to praise the Lord for all their blessings. He has strengthened their city gates against the oppression of their foes. He has kept people at peace within its walls. His teachings help children grow up happy. God's word governs lives as people follow not just a human constitution but divine law. This brings peace and solidarity. Among the many blessings the people receive is wheat, and not just any wheat, but the finest. According to Psalm 147, the bread in Jerusalem has the best ingredients.

The lectionary serves up this psalm in a menu of readings that fit the bill for today's solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Moses reminds the Israelites to remember their many blessings, especially the food that kept them alive in the desert: manna, like bread fallen from the sky. Jesus adopted that image to explain his own ministry: He is the bread that came down from heaven, the new manna that sustains us on our journey. St. Paul reports the institution of the Eucharist, how Jesus left us his own Body and Blood as food and drink under the forms of bread and wine.

Talk about ingredients. No bread and wine is more precious than the one we share in the Eucharist transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. The psalm and first reading especially admonish us to remember our blessings. To that end, the Church expects Catholics to participate in the Eucharist every week. Some come every day. Others come only from time to time. Today's solemnity focuses our attention on this marvelous gift to help us remember its incomparable value.

We do not always thank God for our many blessings. Like ancient Jerusalem, many of us live in a place where we feel safe, where we have peaceful neighbors, and where children grow up happy and learned. We also have food in abundance. Because of the cathedral's outreach to many of the people who live on the streets downtown, we are much aware of those who do not even have a home with walls to be kept safe, who have children they rarely see, and who accept whatever food they can get by any means. Yet many of these guests from the streets will be the first to tell you how blessed they feel. They love being alive, having friends, and receiving the care of those who want to share a meal and a smile. No matter how difficult our lives become, we always have blessings from the Lord if we would just pause long enough to count them.

As we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ this year, let us be especially grateful for and committed to the gift we commemorate this day. This gift protects us from evil, unites us in peace with those who share our values, and activates the privilege of eating and drinking what God provides in every Eucharist, Jesus Christ, the finest ingredient of life.