THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

June 14, 2020

The bread that we break,
is it not a participation
in the body of Christ?
Because the loaf
of bread is one,
we, though many,
are one body,
for we all partake
of the one loaf.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16–17

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Saint Romuald (c. 951-1027)

June 19

"God so loved the world," declares John 3:16. "Do not love the world," warns 1 John 2:15. The "world" to love: this planet, entrusted to our stewardship, and its people, God's children all. The "world" to flee: "sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life" (1 John 2:16). Born in nobility, Romuald's conversion followed the shock of witnessing his father murder an enemy. Renouncing his privileged world, Romuald sought God's world in monastic life. Its winding turns and several dead ends make Romuald's journey resonate with all who find life more maze than superhighway. Both the hermit's solitary struggle and community life's unique challenges shaped Romuald's legacy: his vast Camaldolese Benedictine family of monks, nuns, and lay associates who, these thousand years later, from the mountain solitude of Camaldoli, Italy to an urban monastery in Berkeley, California—in Asia, Africa, South America, Europe—integrate Romuald's experience into their witness of solitary prayer, communal charity and worship, and promotion of contemplative spirituality in this world that can so easily distract us from the God who loves it still.

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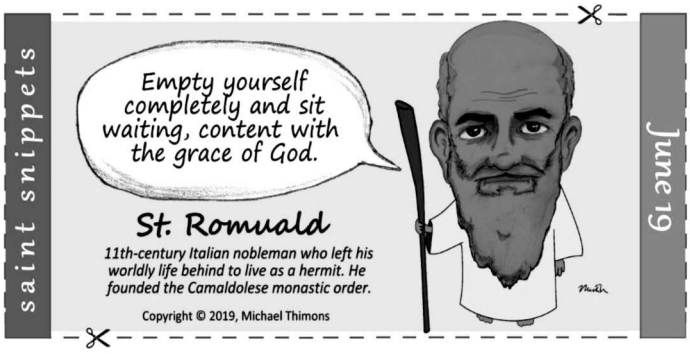

Food From Heaven

God sustained the people of Israel for forty years in the desert with manna sent down from heaven, and Moses doesn't want them to forget it. God brought forth water from stone for them to drink, and Moses doesn't want them to forget this, either. And Moses tells them—twice—that the food that God sent was a food that neither they nor their ancestors before them had ever experienced before.

Jesus too speaks of food come down from heaven, food that the Jewish people had never experienced before. Recalling the manna in the desert, Jesus doesn't want them to forget it either, explaining that he is the food and drink of eternal life. And Paul reiterates to the Corinthians and to all of us that in the bread and in the cup, we share in the body and blood of Christ.

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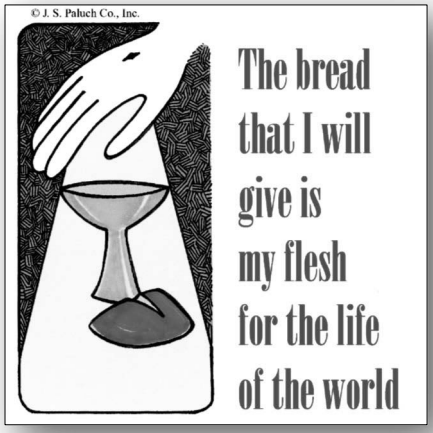
Readings for the Week

Monday:	1 Kgs 21:1-16; Ps 5:2-3ab, 4b-7; Mt 5:38-42
Tuesday:	1 Kgs 21:17-29; Ps 51:3-6ab, 11, 16; Mt 5:43-48
Wednesday:	2 Kgs 2:1, 6-14; Ps 31:20, 21, 24; Mt 6:1-6, 16-18
Thursday:	Sir 48:1-14; Ps 97:1-7; Mt 6:7-15
Friday:	Dt 7:6-11; Ps 103:1-4, 6-8, 10; 1 Jn 4:7-16; Mt 11:25-30
Saturday:	2 Chr 24:17-25; Ps 89:4-5, 29-34; Lk 2:41-51
Sunday:	Jer 20:10-13; Ps 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35; Rom 5:12-15; Mt 10:26-33



Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ; Flag Day
Monday:	Eleventh Week in Ordinary Time
Friday:	The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
Saturday:	The Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary; World Refugee Day; Summer begins

Today's Readings

First Reading — Never forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of slavery (Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a).

Psalm — Praise the Lord, Jerusalem (Psalm 147).

Second Reading — Because the loaf of bread is one, we who partake of it, though we are many, are one body (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

Gospel — Jesus said, "I am the living bread; whoever eats this bread will live forever" (John 6:51-58).

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Treasures From Our Tradition

Ordinary Time beckons, and so on this Sunday we surrender the last glimmers of paschal joy as we celebrate the renewal of our life around the table of the Eucharist. This feast reminds us that the goal of the catechumen's journey through Lent is not the baptismal font at Easter, but rather the experience of Pentecost. It is all about life lived in the Spirit's embrace in relationship to the Body of Christ, which is found both "on the table" and "at the table."

The season of confirmation is also drawing to a close, and this feast serves as a reminder that this sacrament, a solemn sending from font to table, is keyed to renewed vigor. Confirmation has sometimes been sadly misunderstood as a kind of graduation from religious formation, but it is nothing of the sort. It is about being led by the Lord Jesus to the place where the Spirit flourishes, and where the gifts of the Spirit are most easily detectable. After next week we will resume our consideration of the sacrament of confirmation, its rich and somewhat tangled history, its challenging theology, and its changing celebration.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Transformation

The effect of our sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ is to change us into what we receive.

—Pope St. Leo the Great

Praying

One prays best who does not know that one is praying.

—St. Anthony of Padua

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Manna in the desert, water from a rock, bread, wine. God provides food to nourish our bodies and our souls, to bring us into union with the Divine. This is what we celebrate on this Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. The Israelites who journeyed through the desert for forty years knew physical hunger, but they were also hungry for more—they needed to know that God was with them as they made their way through the dangerous desert. We too experience hunger. We need to be assured that the Lord is with us as we navigate the circumstances of our lives, some of which feel dangerous, if not to our bodies, certainly to our spirit. Our participation in the Eucharist provides this assurance and more: fed with Christ's Body and Blood, we are drawn into communion with Christ and one another.

Food For The Journey

The Israelites who journeyed through the desert were fleeing slavery and certain death. But along the way, they encountered serpents and scorpions and experienced great hunger and thirst. God fed them with manna and quenched their thirst with water drawn from a rock. In these miraculous encounters, the people came to believe that God was truly with them on their journey, and with this assurance, grew to rely on and put their trust in God. Jesus began his ministry with a pilgrimage to the desert, where he prayed and placed his trust in his heavenly Father. Strengthened at God's hand, Jesus stayed true to his mission even in the face of cruel death, giving himself, his very life and substance to us in bread and wine at the Last Supper and for his disciples for ages unending.

What Is Your Desert?

Chances are you are not physically wandering in a desert, although millions of people throughout the world live without adequate clean water. All of us experience spiritual and emotional deserts, however. The food that Jesus gives in the Eucharist, his very Body and Blood, soul and divinity, nourish us in our desert moments and strengthen us to live as Christ's people in the world. Partaking in Christ's Body and Blood, we are to live as Christ's people in the world, standing in solidarity with those who are in deserts of their own—physical, spiritual, and emotional. We are called to act as Christ's body, nourishing others through our presence, prayer, and sharing. What is your desert? How does the Eucharist strengthen you as you journey through this dark and sometimes frightening place in life? What deserts of others are you called to address through your caring and sharing as a member of Christ's body, the Church?

Today's Readings: Dt 8:2–3, 14b–16a; Ps 147:12–13, 14–15, 19–20; 1 Cor 10:16–17; Jn 6:51–58

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