The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (B)

Gospel text (*Mk* 14:12-16.22-26): On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"' Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there." The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

While they were eating, He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." Then He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

"This is my body. This is my blood"

Mons. José Ángel SAIZ Meneses, Archbishop of Seville
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Today, we solemnly celebrate the Eucharistic presence of Christ among us, the "gift par excellence": "This is my body... This is my blood" (Mk 14:22.24). Let us prepare to evoke in our souls the "Eucharistic Wonder" (Saint John Paul II).

In their Passover meal the Jewish people commemorated the history of salvation, the wonders God bestowed upon his people, especially the liberation from the slavery in Egypt. In this commemoration, each family ate the Paschal lamb. Jesus Christ becomes the new and definitive Paschal lamb sacrificed on the Cross and eaten in the Eucharistic Bread.

The Eucharist is sacrifice: it is the sacrifice of Christ's immolated body and his blood shed for all of us.

This was anticipated at the Last Supper and continues to be renewed in each Eucharist. In the Eucharist we find our nourishment: it is the new food that gives life and strength to Christians while walking towards the Father.

The Eucharist means the presence of Christ among us. The risen and glorified Christ remains with us in a mysterious, yet real way in the Eucharist. This presence demands an attitude of adoration on our part and a personal communion with Him. The Eucharistic presence ensures that He remains with us and carries out the work of salvation.

The Eucharist is a mystery of faith. It is the center and the key to the life of the Church. It is the source and root of Christian existence. Without Eucharistic experience, the Christian faith would be reduced to a philosophy.

With the institution of the Eucharist Jesus gives us the commandment of love of charity. This is not merely the last recommendation of a friend who is leaving, or of a father who sees death approaching. It is the affirmation of the dynamism that He instills in us. Through Baptism, we begin a new life, which is nourished by the Eucharist. The dynamism of this life leads to love our neighbors, growing until it becomes life-giving: by this they will know that we are Christians.

Christ loves us because He receives life from the Father. So, we too shall love by receiving life from the Father, especially through the nourishment of the Eucharist.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Christ instituted this sacrament as a perpetual memorial of his passion. It was the greatest of all his miracles, while for those who were to experience the sorrow of his departure, it was destined to be a unique and abiding consolation.” (Saint Thomas Aquinas)

- “The Eucharist is truly a glimpse of heaven appearing on earth. It is a glorious ray of the heavenly Jerusalem which pierces the clouds of our history and lights up our journey.” (Saint John Paul II)

- “Having passed from this world to the Father, Christ gives us in the Eucharist the pledge of glory with him. Participation in the Holy Sacrifice identifies us with his Heart, sustains our strength along the pilgrimage of this life, makes us long for eternal life, and unites us even now to the Church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 1419)