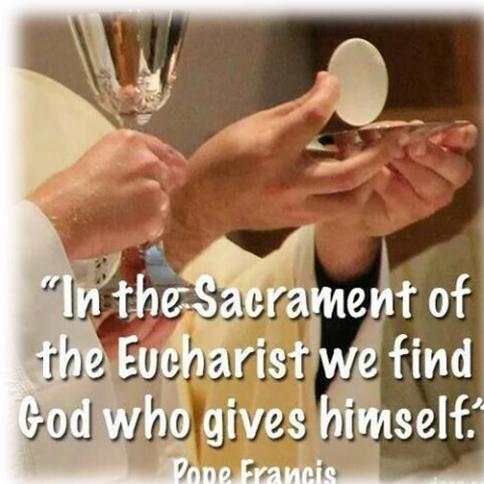


*Feast of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ Year C
(Corpus Christi)*



On 18th June 1978, a young man was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Southwark. In accepting this call from God, he dedicated his life to the service of the people in the parishes in which he would minister. He took as his inspiration the model of Jesus who gave his life for love and in service. This weekend, we pray for him, that he will continue to break Bread with us at the table of the Lord. He is, of course, Canon Alan, who, in his own words, is always speaking of “*Love, Love, Love*”.

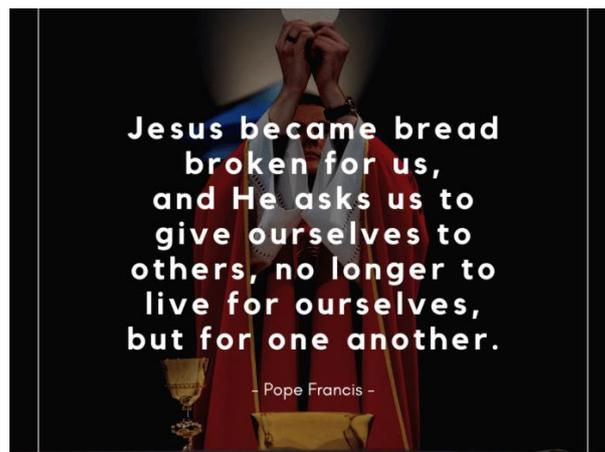
Our first reading today speaks of Melchizedek, a priest of the Old Testament, who brought bread, wine and blessing to Abraham. The psalm response tells us: “You are a priest for ever, a priest like Melchizedek of old”. St Paul, in the second reading, recalls what happened at the Last Supper. Like Melchizedek, Jesus brings bread, wine and blessing. However Jesus brings more than that – he brings himself in the form of bread and wine.



The Gospel according to Luke tells the story of the feeding of the 5,000. This is the only one of Jesus' miracles to appear in all four Gospels. Luke places it between Herod questioning who this Jesus is and Peter's profession of faith when he says, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God*". In Luke's account, the Apostles wanted to send the people away when it became late afternoon. Jesus' response was, "*Give them something to eat yourselves*".

Is this a miracle in which five loaves and two fish fed so many or is it a miracle that once people saw what was happening, they decided to share what they had with others? Does it matter? To those in the early Christian community, hearing this story would remind them of the feeding of the Israelites in the desert and the tale in 2 Kings, when Elisha fed 100 people with 20 loaves. They would also connect it with the Last Supper accounts of, what we now call, the Institution of the Eucharist, as described in the second reading.

Luke is reminding his readers that in this miracle Jesus is doing more than feeding hungry people as God did for the Israelites and the prophet Elisha did as well. The bread he gives is his body, which he will continue to give as often as the community breaks bread in remembrance of him in the Eucharist. "My body" in Hebrew means, "This is me". When we receive Eucharist, we become one with Jesus, our Living Bread. This is Communion.



The Covid pandemic meant that we could not receive Eucharist and what a loss that was. As well as sharing Eucharist once more in the community of The Most Holy Trinity, may we accept the communion that is given to us by God through people, prayer, scripture and life's events and may we truly believe that we are held very gently in the arms of our Good God.

