

How Holy this Feast The Eucharist & the Environment

Welcome

Opening Response

How holy this feast
in which Christ is our food:
his passion is recalled,
grace fills our hearts,
and we receive a pledge of the glory to come.

Introduction

The central symbols of the Eucharist, the bread and wine which become the Body and Blood of Christ, are fruits of the earth. Simple food and drink that is rooted in creation itself. It is also the work of human hands. For Mass the gifts of God's creation are taken and transformed into something new: wheat becomes bread, grapes becomes wine; at Mass we offer these gifts back to God so that the Holy Spirit can transform them into the life-giving Eucharist. In the Mass we can therefore see: God's creation, our effects on it, the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit and that our primary response should be one of thanksgiving for what God has given us (the root of the word Eucharist). In seeing the world with sacramental eyes we can also see the negative effects of humanity on God's creation.

Listen to Scripture

Reading

Psalm 147

O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!
Zion, praise your God!

He has strengthened the bars of your gates,
he has blessed the children within you.
He established peace on your borders,
he feeds you with finest wheat.

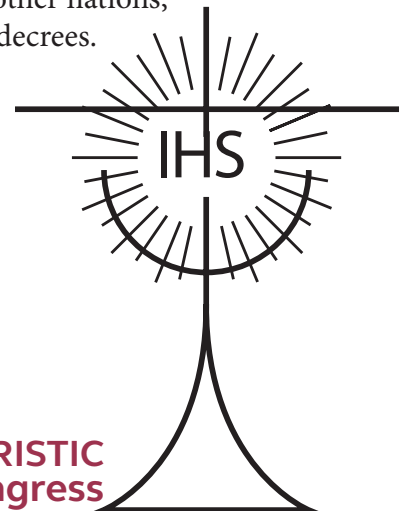
He sends out his word to the earth
and swiftly runs his command.
He showers down snow white as wool,
he scatters hoar-frost like ashes.

He hurls down hailstones like crumbs.
The waters are frozen at his touch;
he sends forth his word and it melts them:
at the breath of his mouth the waters flow.

He makes his word known to Jacob,
to Israel his laws and decrees.
He has not dealt thus with other nations;
he has not taught them his decrees.

Reflection 1

- Where do you experience the beauty of creation?
- Where do you see it scarred and bruised?



Read with the Church

Documents

from the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI *Sacramentum Caritatis* †

Finally, to develop a profound eucharistic spirituality that is also capable of significantly affecting the fabric of society, the Christian people, in giving thanks to God through the Eucharist, should be conscious that they do so in the name of all creation, aspiring to the sanctification of the world and working intensely to that end. The eucharistic form of life can thus help foster a real change in the way we approach history and the world. The liturgy itself teaches us this, when, during the presentation of the gifts, the priest raises to God a prayer of blessing and petition over the bread and wine, “fruit of the earth,” “fruit of the vine” and “work of human hands.” With these words, the rite not only includes in our offering to God all human efforts and activity, but also leads us to see the world as God’s creation, which brings forth everything we need for our sustenance. The world is not something indifferent, raw material to be utilized simply as we see fit. Rather, it is part of God’s good plan, in which all of us are called to be sons and daughters in the one Son of God, Jesus Christ. The justified concern about threats to the environment present in so many parts of the world is reinforced by Christian hope, which commits us to working responsibly for the protection of creation. [92]

From the Encyclical of Pope Francis *Laudato si*’

It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation. Grace, which tends to manifest itself tangibly, found unsurpassable expression when God himself became man and gave himself as food for his creatures. The Lord, in the culmination of the mystery of the Incarnation, chose to reach our intimate depths through a fragment of matter. He comes not from above, but from within, he comes that we might find him in this world of ours. In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved; it is the living centre of the universe, the over-owing core of love and of inexhaustible life. Joined to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love: “Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world”. The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation. The world which came forth from God’s hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration: in the bread of the Eucharist, “creation is projected towards divinisation, towards the holy wedding feast, towards unification with the Creator himself”. Thus, the Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation. [236]

Reflection 2

- How does the Eucharist help you to see the world in a new way?
- What helps you (or reminds you) to be a steward of creation?
- What simple things might the parish consider to be better live out the Eucharist in this way?

Preparation

Think of all the things for which you wish to give thanks.

Think about the situations where you need a new perspective, looking with eucharistic vision?

You may be invited to share these (as much or as little as you wish) with the group or you may wish to keep them to yourself.

Prayer

Daniel 3: 57–88. 56

O all you works of the Lord, O bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.
And you, angels of the Lord, O bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.

And you, the heavens of the Lord, O bless the Lord.
And you, clouds of the sky, O bless the Lord.
And you, all armies of the Lord, O bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.

And you, sun and moon, O bless the Lord.
And you, stars of the heavens, O bless the Lord.
And you, showers and rain, O bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.

And you, all you breezes and winds, O bless the Lord.
And you, fire and heat, O bless the Lord.
And you, cold and heat, O bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.

And you, showers and dew, O bless the Lord.
And you, frosts and cold, O bless the Lord.
And you, frost and snow, O bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.

And you, night-time and day, O bless the Lord.
And you, darkness and light, O bless the Lord.
And you, lightning and clouds, O bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.

O let the earth bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.

And you, mountains and hills, O bless the Lord.
And you, all plants of the earth, O bless the Lord.
And you fountains and springs, O bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.

And you, rivers and seas, O bless the Lord.
And you, creatures of the sea, O bless the Lord.
And you, every bird in the sky, O bless the Lord.
And you, wild beasts and tame, O bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.

And you, children of men, O bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.

O Israel, bless the Lord. O bless the Lord.
And you priests of the Lord, O bless the Lord.
And you, servants of the Lord, O bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.

And you, spirits and souls of the just, O bless the Lord.
And you, holy and humble of heart, O bless the Lord.
Ananias, Azarias, Mizaël, O bless the Lord.
To him be highest glory and praise for ever

Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament

Exposition

Song

Possible themes include: the Eucharist, Praise of God's Creation, and Thanksgiving. Suggested titles:

- All creatures of our God and king
- Be still for the presence of the Lord
- Gifts of Bread and Wine

Adoration

Reading

- Repeat the Scripture reading (Psalm 147) or sing as a responsorial psalm.
- Alternative text: Isaiah 25: 6–10.

Song

- The reading could be followed by the singing of a simple chant
 - Bénissez le Seigneur (Taizé)
 - Laudate Dominum (Taizé)

Prayer

- After a period of silence the Canticle from Daniel — this could be said or sung responsorially.

Silence

Benediction

Eucharistic Song

- Holy, holy, holy is the Lord
- O praise our great and gracious God

Prayer.

The following is suggested from the Rite:

Lord our God,

may we always give due honour

to the sacramental presence of the Lamb who was slain for us.

May our faith be rewarded

by the vision of his glory,

who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Reposition

Acclamation *See Notes*

Following Up

The Bishops' Conference Department for International Affairs has material on *Laudato si'* and the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation

- www.cbcew.org.uk/CBCEW-Home/Departments/International-Affairs/Environment

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