

## Homily for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

June 5-6, 2021

Readings: Exodus 24: 3- 8; Hebrews 9:11-15; Mark 14: 12-16, 22-26

Preacher: Deni Mack

Think for a moment of the time when you felt most alive in your faith. Was it when you held your newborn child? Was it when on retreat? Was it as you gave communion to a loved one?

Any sense we've ever had of oneness with God has been a manifestation of our oneness with all humanity.

That time when you were on fire with love of God I bet you could have said, "I'll do anything for my beloved." The very word – *enthusiastic* comes from *in God. En theo—in God*. When we've fallen in love with a mere human we think, "I'll do anything for him." When we adopt our child we know we'll do anything for this child, anything. That's not a contract; it is covenant!

The people in the today's reading from Exodus said, "We will do everything that the Lord has told us." And those praying today's psalm asked how they could make a return to the Lord for all the good done for them. We ask the same thing, having survived COVID. Despite losses, here we are able to be with one another again! We see smiles, breathe fresh air, drink pure water, swim in serenity, gaze at God's creation: the lakes, the forests! We walk among God's flowers, trees, gardens; we eat the fruit of God's creation with one another again. We're the people of God wanting to make a return to the lord for all the good done for us. We call it paying it forward.

That's why our mercy fund is so healthy these days. People are paying it forward for all the good God has done.

Today we're invited to focus on the Body and Blood of Christ in each of the scriptures and in the action of the Mass. As did ancient peoples we listen to the book of the covenant and drink the blood of the covenant, the cup of salvation. Jesus gives us his body and blood not only to connect with God

but also to connect us with one another. I remember after my mother died my father began to come to mass every day. His hunger to connect with God and my mother and with the People of God drew him to mass.

As we share in Jesus' life and suffering and death and rising throughout our lives we share in his mission on earth pouring out his life for others. In imitation of Jesus we too pour out our lives. We see it in parents who pour out their lives for their children and for one another. We see it especially in those who pour out their lives for all children. I think of Doctors Without Borders and our parishioners with ministries in Kenya and with Elders and Allies who pray at the sites of homicides and those who silently pray each Saturday at noon that people of color are treated with dignity in every policy, procedure, word and gesture, protocol and practice.

The opposite of imitating Jesus is rudeness, hatred, cruelty to migrants, Jews, Asian people, people with disabilities, the mentally ill, anyone! Some say this is new, this incivility. It is not new. 38 years ago I witnessed a gorgeous looking 16-year-old visiting a 16-year-old whose mother and I were with the girls in the kitchen. Suddenly, that gorgeous 16-year-old let fall out of her mouth mean talk on the phone to her mother. Her words are emblazoned in my mind but I will not burn your ears with what she said. Horrific words are not new but they may be more prevalent and they're amplified today. We are the People of God, the Body of Christ fed on Jesus' word, Jesus' Body and Blood to sacrifice, to pour out our lives for one another. What did that girl who so abused her mother need to hear from me, see in me?

I prayed like crazy and tapped her gently on the shoulder. She looked at me. I asked her softly, and looked at her with all the love Jesus fed me, "Please don't ever speak like that to your mother or to anyone, ever." She looked down. I could hear her mother through the phone whispering her daughter's name through her tears. She said to her mother, "I'm sorry." We talked; we listened; Jesus loved that gorgeous 16-year-old girl. At least that is what I tried to let my eyes and words say.

For whom was Christ's blood shed?

