



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



ordinary
time



lectionary
reading

Cycle A

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Lectionary # 167

Reading 1: Deuteronomy 8: 2-3, 14-16

Every Eucharistic celebration is an invitation to do what Moses asks of the people in this first reading: to remember. In this passage we hear Moses asking the people to remember how God saved them from slavery in Egypt, led them through the desert, and provided for all their needs. Moses call the people to remember all theses events in gratitude, to be **thankful** for all that God has done for them. Likewise each time we gather for the celebration of the Eucharist (the word Eucharist actually is Greek for **thanksgiving**) we are called into a celebration with gratitude in our hearts for all that God has done for us, to be a people of **thanksgiving**.

Reading 2: 1 Corinthians 10: 16-17

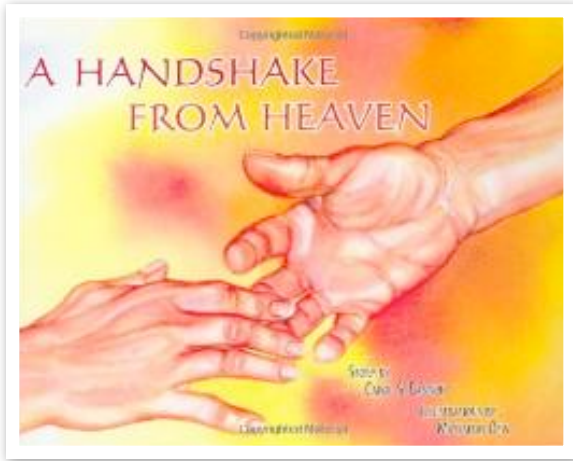
Saint Paul's questions are not what they seem in this passage. They appear to call for faith in the *real presence* of Christ in the Eucharistic elements, however, Saint Paul wishes the community to see something different. Saint Paul desires the community to see that the totality of Christ is present in the elements along with the presence of Christ in the gathered community as a people of **thanksgiving**, a people living and rooted in gratitude.

Gospel: John 6: 51-58

These words of Jesus are uttered as the ultimate self-offering and not of self-aggrandizement. In most of Saint John's portrayal of Jesus, a decision is being asked for, a statement of belief. What greater way can one proclaim one's willingness to be in relationship than the total offering of oneself. This total self-giving is evidenced by Jesus coming down to us as the bread from heaven, through his willing self-sacrifice for the salvation of the world, to his on-going presence among believers as the bread that gathers around the table of communion. For this we are indeed **thankful**.



children's
story



Handshake from Heaven

Written by Carol S. Bannon
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character
education
activity

**Thanksgiving is the
expression of gratitude,
especially to God. Each
celebration of the Eucharist is
exactly this!**

Handshake from Heaven

The author of this work brings the experience of teacher, writer, catechist, mother, grandmother and woman of deep faith. In her work she has developed a book for children that describes the Eucharist as a way in which the child can envision themselves as holding God's hand when they receive the Eucharist. She also describes the Eucharist as that hand that opens the door to heaven. The story makes use of the analogy of holding God's hand as a way to emphasize that the more one receives communion the more deeply we enter into our relationship with Jesus. She guides the reader to a greater appreciation and **thanksgiving** for the great gift given to us in the celebration and reception of the Eucharist.

Activity

Step One: Share with the students your personal understanding of the **thanksgiving**. Tell them a story of how God has given you some blessing through another person or event. Invite them to think of something that they are **thankful** to God for and tell a story of that event or person whereby they have been blessed by God.

Step Two: Explain the meaning of the Eucharist as a way in which Jesus wanted to be present with us throughout history and how our participation in the Eucharist is one of the chief manners in which we as Catholics give thanks to God.

Step Three: Guide the students in making a border of their handprints around a table cloth that might be used on the altar at one of their school masses (it could later be used as the table covering for the table in the prayer corner of the classroom).

Handwrite the child's first name and last name initial along the border of the cloth. Have the children then trace over their name with a felt tip pen that does not bleed.

Direct the children to place their hand in a color of paint of their choice and have them first make a print of their hand on a piece of paper and then make the handprint above their name on the cloth.

Thanksgiving to God is one of the most important prayers that any of us may enter into.



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

What could you do today?

Make a commitment to see the celebration of Sunday mass as an essential part of your weekly activities. Just from a mathematical perspective think of it in this way: there are 7 days in a week and there are 24 hours in each day. When you do the multiplication of 24 hours by 7 days you get 168 hours in a given week. Given all of these hours in a week it is important to give **thanksgiving** to God for at least one of the 168 hours on God's special day, Sunday. Remind your family that one hour out of 168 is a very easy thing to schedule.

Look Feel Know Act

Look around at the world you live in and then take the time to make a list of all the things God has given you. Things like the air that you breathe and clean water that you have to drink. Such things are common to our daily life and the danger in the common things of life is that we may end up taking them for granted. Taking things for granted is just the opposite of living in a **thankful** manner. After you have made the list (and the list may be something you add to each day) sense and feel the gratitude for each of these things and persons and one by one thank God for them individually by name. By having an on-going list you may begin to realize how God has given you endless things and people to enhance your life. Express this thanks to God as often as you remember to. You may even wish to carry this list to mass on Sunday and during the presentation of the gifts you might want to hold up the list as your ways of giving **thanksgiving** to God.

In the *Handshake from Heaven* the reader is made aware of the deep wish of God to be in relationship with us. God's wanting to be in relationship with us, which is the theme of all of the readings for this Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, indicates how very much we are loved by God. The Eucharist becomes an opportunity to say **thank you** to God's self-giving to us in so many ways. It is true that in any relationship a sense of gratitude and **thanksgiving** is essential. It is crucial that we place this virtue of being ever **thankful** at the very center of our lives, just as the Eucharist is to be at the very center of our lives as Roman Catholic Christians.



**closing
tool**

Pray that you will always be a person who lives out of a sense of gratitude and thanksgiving. Pray also that you will make the celebration and the reception of the Eucharist at the very center of your life. Amen.



**Santa Clara
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