

FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI  
22 June 2025

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Part One: the readings for the day  
Part Two: reflections on the readings  
Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY  
Lectionary: 169

Reading I Genesis 14:18-20

In those days, Melchizedek, king of Salem,  
brought out bread and wine,  
and being a priest of God Most High,  
he blessed Abram with these words:

Blessed be Abram by God Most High,  
the creator of heaven and earth;  
and blessed be God Most High,  
who delivered your foes into your hand.

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 110:1, 2, 3, 4

R (4b) You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

The LORD said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand  
till I make your enemies your footstool."

R You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

The scepter of your power the LORD will stretch forth from  
Zion:

"Rule in the midst of your enemies."

R You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

"Yours is princely power in the day of your birth, in holy  
splendor;

before the daystar, like the dew, I have begotten you."

R You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

The LORD has sworn, and he will not repent:

"You are a priest forever, according to the order

of Melchizedek."

R You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

Reading II 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Brothers and sisters:

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,  
that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over,  
took bread, and, after he had given thanks,  
broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying,  
"This cup is the new covenant in my blood.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."  
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,  
you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

Sequence: Lauda Sion

Laud, O Zion, your salvation,  
Laud with hymns of exultation,  
Christ, your king and shepherd true:

Bring him all the praise you know,  
He is more than you bestow.  
Never can you reach his due.

Special theme for glad thanksgiving  
Is the quick'ning and the living  
Bread today before you set:

From his hands of old partaken,  
As we know, by faith unshaken,  
Where the Twelve at supper met.

Full and clear ring out your chanting,  
Joy nor sweetest grace be wanting,  
From your heart let praises burst:

For today the feast is holden,  
When the institution olden  
Of that supper was rehearsed.

Here the new law's new oblation,  
By the new king's revelation,  
Ends the form of ancient rite:

Now the new the old effaces,  
Truth away the shadow chases,  
Light dispels the gloom of night.

What he did at supper seated,  
Christ ordained to be repeated,  
His memorial ne'er to cease:

And his rule for guidance taking,  
Bread and wine we hallow, making  
Thus our sacrifice of peace.

This the truth each Christian learns,  
Bread into his flesh he turns,  
To his precious blood the wine:

Sight has fail'd, nor thought conceives,  
But a dauntless faith believes,  
Resting on a pow'r divine.

Here beneath these signs are hidden  
Priceless things to sense forbidden;  
Signs, not things are all we see:

Blood is poured and flesh is broken,  
Yet in either wondrous token  
Christ entire we know to be.

Whoso of this food partakes,  
Does not rend the Lord nor breaks;  
Christ is whole to all that taste:

Thousands are, as one, receivers,  
One, as thousands of believers,  
Eats of him who cannot waste.

Bad and good the feast are sharing,  
Of what divers dooms preparing,  
Endless death, or endless life.

Life to these, to those damnation,  
See how like participation  
Is with unlike issues rife.

When the sacrament is broken,  
Doubt not, but believe 'tis spoken,  
That each sever'd outward token  
doth the very whole contain.

Nought the precious gift divides,  
Breaking but the sign betides  
Jesus still the same abides,  
still unbroken does remain.

Alleluia John 6:51

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven,  
says the Lord;  
whoever eats this bread will live forever.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel Luke 9:11b-17

Jesus spoke to the crowds about the kingdom of God,  
and he healed those who needed to be cured.

As the day was drawing to a close,  
the Twelve approached him and said,

"Dismiss the crowd

so that they can go to the surrounding villages and farms  
and find lodging and provisions;

for we are in a deserted place here."

He said to them, "Give them some food yourselves."

They replied, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have,  
unless we ourselves go and buy food for all these people."

Now the men there numbered about five thousand.

Then he said to his disciples,

"Have them sit down in groups of about fifty."

They did so and made them all sit down.

Then taking the five loaves and the two fish,

and looking up to heaven,

he said the blessing over them, broke them,

and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.

They all ate and were satisfied.

And when the leftover fragments were picked up,  
they filled twelve wicker baskets.

## PART TWO: REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

Today is the Solemnity of Corpus Christi – the Body of Christ.

The Body of Christ, of course, refers to two things at once: It means the Blessed Sacrament. But “the Body of Christ” also refers to the Church. We are the Body of Christ.

Here at Saint Leo’s the Body of Christ is a community that transcends nationality and ethnicity. We have folks from Italy and Croatia, the Philippines and Ireland, Bolivia, France, Fiji and Austria. Here at Saint Leo’s, we also have people that have come to be with us from Mexico.

Truly, as you can see just from looking at your parish here on Aqua Caliente Road, the Church is a community that binds together the many ethnicities from around the world and transcends the borders that separate the nations.

And so, on this Solemnity of Corpus Christi, I want to reflect on the reality of immigration here in the USA in light of our Christian faith.

In today’s Gospel, the disciples ask Jesus to “dismiss the crowd.” The sun has sunk low in the sky and the people will need “lodging and provisions” for the night. But Jesus tells his disciples that the people are not to be sent away. The people are to be welcomed. In fact, he plans to feed them.

The disciples are surprised to hear this and ask a practical question,

Five loaves and two fish are all we have,  
unless we ourselves go and buy food for all these  
people.

But Jesus insists – the people are not to be sent away.

Luke tells us that the Lord was preaching about the Kingdom of God that day. But in fact, the whole story about the miraculous feeding of the multitude is a parable about the Kingdom of God.

I need to say something really important about us here at Saint Leo's in light of all the strife we are seeing these days over immigration.

It's this: the Lord, through the working of the Holy Spirit, wants Saint Leo's to be a parable of the Kingdom of God. In Luke's story, the people are not sent away. Jesus welcomes them. And this is what the Kingdom of God is like.

So, let me tell you about Miguel.

Miguel is a little boy – just 10 years old. His nickname is Miguelito. Miguelito tried to harm himself a few months ago. He was in the back seat of the family car. His mom and dad had just picked him up from school. Without any warning, Miguelito unbuckled his seatbelt and wrapped it several times around his neck. Then he pulled on the belt so hard he put welts around his little neck. His parents brought him to the ER at Sonoma Valley hospital and then called me.

Why would a little boy do such a thing?

Miguelito is anxious. In fact, he is overwhelmed with anxiety. He is afraid that one day at school, when the bell rings at 2:15 in the afternoon, his parents are not going to be there to pick him up as they always do. This is because Miguel's parents and Miguelito himself are immigrants. They have come here from Venezuela.

There are no jobs in Venezuela for Miguel's dad. Today, in Venezuela, a man can't feed his family any longer growing corn on a few acres of land. The wealth of Venezuela is going into the pockets of the elites and the international oil companies. Miguel's hometown in Venezuela is controlled by drug gangs. His dad told me that it would be only a matter of time before his little boy would have to join one of these gangs in order to survive.

And so, the family left Venezuela.

To get here Miguelito walked through the Darien Gap. This is 70 miles of mountains and swamp, snakes and

bandits. Miguelito saw terrible things in the Darien Gap... things that I never saw when I was 10 years old.

Now Miguel is here with us at Saint Leo's. He is soaking up English like a dry sponge soaks up water. He has lots of new friends. He plays soccer with his buddies during recess. His classmates translate into Spanish what the teacher is saying in class. Saint Leo's is helping Miguelito's family every month with a little money for the rent, thanks to your generosity to the Saint Vincent de Paul Society.

Is Miguel going to be okay?

I don't know.

But I do know this: migration, here in the USA, is a mess. It's a mess because the global economy is a mess. NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement) made it possible for American corporations, with subsidies from the US government, to sell corn in Mexico dirt cheap. As a result of the free trade agreement, millions of families were thrown off small farms in Mexico. And the children of these families didn't become bankers in Mexico City or oil tycoons in Monterrey. They came here to Sonoma hoping to mow our lawns and scrub our toilets.

Is Miguelito going to be okay?

I don't know.

But I do know this: Miguelito is not a drug dealer or a rapist. He is not invading the United States. He's a little boy who has been dealt a nasty hand and now has to do things I can't imagine. This little boy is so anxious that he has tried to strangle himself.

And I also know this: Miguelito is a human being. He was created in the image and likeness of God... Yes: our God. The God we worship here at Saint Leo's. And as such, the world must recognize that this little boy is not just a statistic. He is something special. He enjoys a human dignity that does not come from the US government or the government of Venezuela or from any other government.

The dignity of the human person is an act of God. All of us have a responsibility to respect the human dignity of this little boy who has come to be with us here at Saint Leo's and now has tried to harm himself. This is the teaching of the Church.

And I'll tell you something else that is the teaching of the Church. As part of the asylum application process, the government must never separate this little boy from his parents. This is an abomination that cries out to heaven for justice.

Next month, Miguelito's dad has a hearing as part of his family's asylum case. His dad must appear before a judge in a courtroom in the Federal Building down in San Francisco.

I told his dad that this is very dangerous. ICE could arrest him after the hearing. "Padre," he said,

"I have to go. We are asking for asylum and cooperating with the government. I have to go down there because it's the law."

I want you to know that I plan to attend this hearing if I can. If Miguelito's dad is arrested, I want to be able to drive back to Sonoma right away and tell Miguel what happened to his dad.

Immigration is a mess because the global economic system is a mess. And here, at Saint Leo's, we don't know how to fix it.

We can't fix immigration, but we can open our hearts to Miguel and his family. He doesn't need much help with learning English, but we can help him with math and reading. We can help a little in paying the rent and providing some groceries.

And we can share our faith with Miguelito. After all, he has already begun to share his faith with us. We can tell Miguelito the story about how Jesus didn't send the people away and how he fed the multitude with just five loaves of bread and a two little fish.

### PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* ("divine reading"). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as "a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys"). I find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.

Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don't rush. You are not looking for information or instructions. You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually "reading" the Bible. Rather, we are "listening" to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the homily on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?