



own imminent suffering and death, he gives them something simpler and more concrete: something to touch, taste, repeat and remember – something that would keep them together over the days ahead.

As well as being a sacrament of God's self-gift to us, the Eucharist is also a sacrament of our self-gift to one another. In his first letter to the Corinthians, St Paul tells the Corinthians off for the way that they are celebrating the Lord's Supper, and talks about the dangers of eating and drinking "without recognising the Body" (1 Corinthians 11:29). He is not just talking about the need to receive the bread and the cup carefully, conscious that they are the body and blood of the Lord. He is also talking about the need to receive them in a way that recognises the body who are gathered to celebrate and remember together. The word "body" is significant: it's not just a group of people, it is a body of people, a unit, who belong to one another and depend upon one another. Celebrating as the Corinthians have been doing, with one person going hungry while another is getting drunk, fails to recognise that.

SAVED TOGETHER

Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli tutti* (Brothers and sisters all), released in October last year, is about how we belong to one another as a body, not only as the Church gathered around the Eucharist, but as a global community. The coronavirus pandemic, the Pope says, has shown that "one person's problems are the problems of all", and that "no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together" (32). When we fail to recognise the rights of migrants, or pursue exploitative trade deals with poorer nations, when we treat political opponents with contempt, or ignore the equality of women, we are guilty of "not recognising the body". The feast of Corpus Christi invites us to renew our devotion, both to the Eucharist and to one another.

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**He fed them with the finest wheat
and satisfied them with honey from the rock.**

FIRST READING Exodus 24:3-8

PSALM Psalm 115

**RESPONSE The cup of salvation I will raise;
I will call on the Lord's name.**

Or **Alleluia!**

1. How can I repay the Lord
for his goodness to me?
The cup of salvation I will raise;
I will call on the Lord's name. **R.**
2. O precious in the eyes of the Lord
is the death of his faithful.
Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;
you have loosened my bonds. **R.**
3. A thanksgiving sacrifice I make:
I will call on the Lord's name.
My vows to the Lord I will fulfil
before all his people. **R.**

SECOND READING Hebrews 9:11-15

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!
I am the living bread which has come down
from heaven,
says the Lord.
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL Mark 14:12-16. 22-26

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.**

Next Sunday's Readings:

Ezekiel 17:22-24
2 Corinthians 5:6-10
Mark 4:26-34

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SUNDAY BULLETIN

REAL PRESENCE



The last twelve months have taught us a huge amount about the importance of bodies and physical presence to one another. With households, families and friendship groups separated by lockdown and mixing restrictions for long periods, many of us have got better at staying in touch in digital ways. Couples have met and started dating over FaceTime, grandparents have met new grandchildren over Zoom, and the funerals of loved ones have been livestreamed: the whole cycle of life has moved online. But even as we are enormously grateful for how technology brings us together and enables us to connect in ways that were unimaginable fifty years ago, we know it's just not the same. We feel the absence of real presence: we miss being able to stroke the brow of someone who is sick, or hug someone who is exhausted and stressed, we miss the way a new baby grips our fingers. Amid the anxiety and hardship the pandemic has brought for many people, we are deeply conscious of our need for this real presence to each other.

Corpus Christi, the feast of the body and blood of Christ, is all about real, flesh-and-blood presence. The Gospel tells the story of Jesus sharing a Passover meal with his disciples. As he has done many times before, Jesus takes bread and, in a recognisable gesture, breaks it and gives it to them, saying, "This is my body." He then offers them the wine, saying, "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many." The words are so familiar to us that it is hard to hear them like the disciples, as something new and perplexing. Jesus had tried to tell them about his suffering and death, and prepare them for the collapse of their dreams of what the kingdom of God was going to be like, but they hadn't really understood. So, facing his

Building a civilisation of love



Today we begin a new series in which Dr Theodora Hawksley, a theologian working at the London Jesuit Centre, looks at the Church's social teaching.

6 JUNE 2021

THE MOST HOLY BODY
AND BLOOD OF CHRIST
(CORPUS CHRISTI)

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK II



the way it unfurls determines the kingdom we end up with. If we plan a peaceful utopia, but try to get there by violence and coercion, we will end up with what Tacitus said the Romans had: "They build a desert and call it peace." If we want a future of prosperity, but our economic system is designed to enrich a tiny minority at the expense of the majority, then we will end up with inequality.

In a remark made to young people last year, Pope Francis told them not just to prepare *for* the future, but to *prepare the future*. The Christian life is not about responding passively to a future that is prepared by other hands, or determined by other forces. It is about actively preparing the future that we hope for, by striving to live as citizens of the kingdom of God.

A DIFFERENT VISION

One good example is how Catholic social teaching asks us to think about migrants and refugees. Our political conversation about refugees is dominated by the idea that there is not enough for us and for them: to protect our way of life, we need to keep them out. Catholic social teaching invites us to recognise that the kingdom of God is like the tree in Jesus' parable, or in the reading from the prophet Ezekiel: a place where every kind of bird is equally at home. And so it asks us to shape our treatment of migrants and refugees around a different vision: as Pope Francis puts it, "if all people are my brothers and sisters, and if the world truly belongs to everyone, then it matters little whether my neighbour was born in my country or elsewhere" (*Fratelli tutti* 125). We are asked to recognise that migrants are neighbours in need, and to develop policies that reflect this challenging vision.

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**O Lord, hear my voice, for I have called to you;
be my help.
Do not abandon or forsake me, O God, my
Saviour!**

FIRST READING Ezekiel 17:22-24

PSALM Psalm 91

RESPONSE **It is good to give you thanks, O Lord.**

1. It is good to give thanks to the Lord to make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your truth in the watches of the night. **R.**
2. The just will flourish like the palm-tree and grow like a Lebanon cedar. **R.**
3. Planted in the house of the Lord they will flourish in the courts of our God, still bearing fruit when they are old, still full of sap, still green, to proclaim that the Lord is just. In him, my rock, there is no wrong. **R.**

SECOND READING 2 Corinthians 5:6-10

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!
The seed is the word of God, Christ the sower;
whoever finds the seed will remain for ever.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL Mark 4:26-34

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Holy Father, keep in your name those you have
given me,
that they may be one as we are one, says the
Lord.**

Next Sunday's Readings:

Job 38:1. 8-11
2 Corinthians 5:14-17
Mark 4:35-41

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SUNDAY BULLETIN

PREPARING THE FUTURE



Jesus lived in an era of intense expectation. The Judaism of his time was a ferment of different movements and messiah figures, many of them responding to the pressures of living under Roman occupation, with puppet kings ruling over them. Some thought the answer was to escape to the desert and live a life of purity, others thought the answer was to educate ordinary Jewish people about observance of the Law. Still others dreamed of overthrowing the occupiers altogether, as the Maccabees had done in 167-160 BC, and as another Jewish rebel group would attempt in AD 66-73, only a few decades after Jesus' death. The peasant people among whom Jesus lived also needed hope for the future: life was hard, with taxes adding to the woes of subsistence farmers and day labourers trying to find enough to eat from one day to the next. So, as Jesus describes what the kingdom of God is like, people are hanging on his every word. What will he say it's going to be like? And how can we achieve it?

Jesus' answer might have come as a surprise. The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, the tiniest of all the seeds, but which grows into the biggest shrub of all, putting out branches for the birds of the air to shelter in its shade. He uses another parable, too: it's like a seed that grows by itself, until it's ready to harvest. What can we understand from this?

I think the answer is to do with means and ends, or how we get where we're going. The kingdom of God is not a destination that we can reach by any means, like I can get to Newcastle by train or bicycle. The way we take to get there determines where we end up. A seed cannot become a large tree by any means: it becomes a tree by growing, unfurling according to its own internal logic, until it becomes a huge tree. Similarly, the "seed" of our ideas and

Building a civilisation of love



Dr Theodora Hawksley, a theologian working at the London Jesuit Centre, reflects on today's readings in the light of the Church's social teaching.

13 JUNE 2021

11TH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK III

When *Laudato si'* tells us that "We are not God", it is inviting us to find our proper place in creation. When we plunder the earth's resources and pollute her land, air and waters, we act as though we were all-powerful, separate from the rest of creation and unaffected by it. In a word, we behave like gods. *Laudato si'* invites us to give up behaving like destructive deities and rediscover ourselves as *creatures*, living alongside other creatures in an interdependent whole. "Everything is connected", and so everything we do has an effect in the broader web of relationships that God has created. We are not creators: we cannot dictate the way that different species, from the tiniest bacteria to the largest predators, work together to sustain life on earth. Even with the best of human wisdom, we cannot understand creation completely, and

we cannot engineer our way out of the climate crisis. Instead, we are called to recognise and respect the wisdom of natural systems, and to learn to live in harmony with them. So healing our relationship with earth and the other creatures of our common home, we are also finding our proper place in relation to God.

We are not God, we are creatures. To recognise this, and to renew our relationships with God, with one another and with the rest of creation, is what it means to enter into the "new creation" St Paul describes.

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**The Lord is the strength of his people,
a saving refuge for the one he has anointed.
Save your people, Lord, and bless your
heritage,
and govern them for ever.**

FIRST READING Job 38:1. 8-11

PSALM Psalm 106

RESPONSE **O give thanks to the Lord,
for his love endures for ever.**

Or **Alleluia!**

1. Some sailed to the sea in ships
to trade on the mighty waters.
These men have seen the Lord's deeds,
the wonders he does in the deep. **R.**
2. For he spoke; he summoned the gale,
tossing the waves of the sea
up to heaven and back into the deep;
their soul melted away in their distress. **R.**
3. Then they cried to the Lord in their need
and he rescued them from their distress.
He stilled the storm to a whisper:
all the waves of the sea were hushed. **R.**

4. They rejoiced because of the calm
and he led them to the haven they desired.
Let them thank the Lord for his love,
the wonders he does for men. **R.**

SECOND READING 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!
A great prophet has appeared among us;
God has visited his people.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL Mark 4:35-41

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**I am the Good Shepherd,
and I lay down my life for my sheep, says the
Lord.**

Next Sunday's Readings:
Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24
2 Corinthians 8:7. 9. 13-15
Mark 5:21-43

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SUNDAY BULLETIN

NEW CREATION

Over the last few years, the seriousness of the climate crisis has become clearer to us than ever. All of the ten hottest years ever recorded on earth have taken place since 1998, and extreme weather events are becoming more frequent. We have become aware of the mass extinction being driven by human activities, and the destruction of ancient landscapes and crucial rainforests. And we know that, unless we take drastic action to limit the rising temperature of the earth, all of this is going to get a great deal worse – and that it will hit the poorest and most vulnerable peoples of earth the hardest. *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis' encyclical about the environment, puts it very starkly: "Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth" (161).

In light of this, what are we to make of the claim in today's second reading that "in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here"? What does belief in a new creation mean, as we struggle to protect the fragile and suffering creation that we inhabit?

The answer that *Laudato si'* offers ties in nicely with this Sunday's readings. The first reading and the Gospel both make the same point: as Pope Francis puts it very bluntly, "We are not God" (67). The book of Job tells the story of a good man tested by suffering, whose friends gather round to comfort him and explain why he is suffering. At the end of the book, God answers "from the heart of the tempest" with a beautiful hymn to divine power in creation, describing everything from God's power over the sea, to God's arrangement of the stars and knowledge of the ways of all creatures. God's wisdom and power is so much greater than human knowledge. The Gospel picks up the same theme. By demonstrating his effortless control over the raging sea, Jesus shows himself as having divine power. When the disciples ask, "Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him," the reader is meant to answer, "God!"



Building a civilisation of love



Dr Theodora
Hawksley, a
theologian working
at the London Jesuit
Centre, reflects
on the call to care
for the earth, our
common home.

20 JUNE 2021

12TH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK IV



every single person has the resources that he or she needs to live and to develop. Sometimes that work takes the form of small actions: giving to our local foodbank, or volunteering in a homeless kitchen. But it's equally important to work to change the social and economic conditions that mean people are forced to use foodbanks or end up losing their homes. As Pope Francis puts it, "It is an act of charity to assist someone suffering, but it is also an act of charity, even if we do not know that person, to work to change the social conditions that caused his or her suffering. If someone helps an elderly person cross a river, that is a fine act of charity. The politician, on the other hand, builds a bridge, and that too is an act of charity. While one person can help another by providing something to eat, the politician creates a job for that other person, and thus practices a lofty form of charity that ennobles his or her political activity" (*Fratelli tutti* 186).

IMITATING CHRIST

When we have plenty, we give to those who do not have enough; when we do not have enough, those with plenty should give to us. Catholic social teaching says that this is not just charity, but justice: because the good things of creation are meant for all, everyone has the right to have enough. What St Paul shows us in today's reading is that this is also a way of imitating Christ, who chooses to give us all he has.

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**All peoples, clap your hands.
Cry to God with shouts of joy!**

FIRST READING Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24

PSALM Psalm 29

RESPONSE **I will praise you, Lord, you have rescued me.**

1. I will praise you, Lord, you have rescued me and have not let my enemies rejoice over me. O Lord, you have raised my soul from the dead, restored me to life from those who sink into the grave. **R.**
2. Sing psalms to the Lord, you who love him, give thanks to his holy name. His anger lasts but a moment; his favour through life. At night there are tears, but joy comes with dawn. **R.**
3. The Lord listened and had pity. The Lord came to my help. For me you have changed my mourning into dancing, O Lord my God, I will thank you for ever. **R.**

SECOND READING 2 Corinthians 8:7. 9. 13-15

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!
Our Saviour Christ Jesus abolished death,
and he has proclaimed life through the Good News.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL Mark 5:21-43

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all within me, his holy name.**

Next Sunday's Readings:
Ezekiel 2:2-5
2 Corinthians 12:7-10
Mark 6:1-6

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SUNDAY BULLETIN

EQUAL DIGNITY, EQUAL SHARE

A few years ago, I spent six months living and working among indigenous people in Guyana, South America. The Macushi and Wapichan people I lived with were unusual in having no word in their languages for "thank you". One man explained to me that this was simply because it was expected that people would support one another: "Today I have cassava, tomorrow you have fish, and we share." It's an attitude forged by thousands of years of living by gathering and hunting in the forest, and growing food as subsistence farmers. It was also because the people had a mindset of abundance: in a tropical country, fruit and vegetables grow all year round, so while available foods change, there will be enough for all if people share.

In today's second reading St Paul is writing to the Corinthians about sharing and it is clear that, like us, the Corinthians have different attitudes about it from the Macushi and Wapichan people I met in Guyana. Paul is encouraging them to remember the example of Christ, who "was rich, but he became poor for your sake, to make you rich out of his poverty". Paul doesn't mean Christ had material wealth, but he is asking the Corinthians to imitate Jesus' willingness to give what he had for the good of others.

One of the most radical principles in Catholic social teaching is the "universal destination of goods". Very simply, it means that the earth is created for all, and that because all human beings share an equal dignity, we all have the right to an equal share in the good things the earth produces. The earth is given to us by God to sustain everyone equally, and none of us has the right to take so much that others do not have enough.

We do not live in such a world at present. Rather, we live in a world in which the populations of wealthier nations consume a disproportionate share of the earth's resources, while the populations of poorer nations (and some people in wealthier nations, too) struggle for the basic necessities of life: sufficient food, clean water, access to healthcare and so on. So what is the answer? This principle of the "universal destination of goods" means that, as Catholics, we are asked to work to ensure that

Building a civilisation of love



Dr Theodora Hawksley, a theologian working at the London Jesuit Centre, looks at Catholic teaching on the "universal destination of goods".



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13TH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK I