Corpus Christi Year 2 (Ex 24:3-8; Heb 9:11-15; Mk 14:12-16,22-26)

 **GOD WITHIN US**

I hope that nobody present has a problem with the mention of blood, because today’s three readings are connected by the symbol and the reality of blood.

 The sign and seal of a great gift granted to us by God is the blood of animals, of Jesus Christ and our own. This is the gift of the Covenant that God has made with us. The word “covenant” means “coming together”. God wants us to come together with him now and forever.

In many of the stories in the Hebrew Bible, God defends us against our enemies, protects us against dangers and guides us to freedom. God is *God-for-us.*

When Jesus comes, a new dimension of the covenant is revealed. In Jesus, the Word of God assumes human nature, grows to maturity, lives, suffers, and dies as we do. God is *God-with-us*.

Finally, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit. God reveals the full depth of the covenant in the Holy Spirit. God wants to be as close to us as our breath. God wants to breathe in us, so that all we say, think, and do is completely inspired by God. God is *God-within-us.*

So, God is for us, with us, and within us. God’s covenant reveals to us how much God loves us.

This Covenant became ever more inclusive until it involves no longer one people only, the Israelites, as we read in the first reading from Exodus (Ex 24:3-8), but all people.

According to our second reading, from the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 9:11-15), Jesus Christ entered into the sanctuary with his own blood. The blood is no longer that of animals but of the God-man, head of the body of which we are the members.

His sacramental blood is our spiritual drink and continues to be the seal of love of an eternal covenant. Every baptized person takes part in it. The communion in the Blood of Christ transforms us into Christ, the one who made the new covenant (cf. Mk 14:22-25).

Speaking like this, we don't speak only of spiritual things.

*Our* blood enters concretely into the new covenant. While we exert ourselves to serve others, our heart beats more quickly, our blood runs faster, our blood pressure rises. Our life, if not our blood, is poured out in service of others. The covenant is confirmed with our own blood in our daily commitments: in family life, at work, in civil society, in our parish, in the body of the Church. There is no communion with Jesus Christ without practical service of our brothers and sisters.

The prayer of the 1994 Italian National Eucharistic Congress in Siena entered into the realities of the covenant in the blood of Christ and in the blood of his members. As we pray, let us ask for communion with Jesus Christ through practical service of others.

"Lord Jesus Christ, hear our prayer. You have closely joined the mystery of your presence in the Sacrament of the Altar to your commandment to serve our brothers and sisters.

"When you washed the feet of the Apostles at the Last Supper, you taught us to give flesh and blood to our faith and to combine adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with our daily commitments.

"Lord, we need to find again the peace of intimacy with you in the Blessed Sacrament of our tabernacles. But we also want to break down the barriers that separate our eucharistic piety from our lived experience of family life and life in society.

"May we continue in our daily life the Eucharist that we are celebrating this morning. Help us to believe in your presence in the Blessed Sacrament with more conviction and to love you and others more generously. Grant that our communities may rediscover joy in your presence and pride in following you as our Master and Guide, on the way to God, our Father."