*For me, a magical moment happens when I receive communion, particularly from a person I don’t know at a parish I have never been to. The Eucharistic Minister raises up the communion and say “Body of Christ” and I reply “Amen”, which means “I agree” (please take note: not “I believe”).*

*At one level I am agreeing to the fact that this is the Body of Christ that I am receiving. But at another level, I am also agreeing to the fact that the Eucharistic Minister and I are part of the same Body of Christ. And at that moment, a truth dawns that two persons who have never met and who may never meet again are part of the same family, bound by the same faith in the same belief in the same God. And at that moment, wherever I am in the world, I am home. That to me is the meaning of communion and the meaning of the Body of Christ.*

Year **C**

SOLEMNITY of the BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

Second Sunday after Pentecost

**Theme**

We are fed together at the table of God

**Points to note**

A parallel with the family at home can be suggested here as often as possible. In Asian cultures, it is said that the family that eats together stays together. Stress that as a family, God’s family too, must eat together to stay together.

Be sensitive to children who may not yet be of age for communion. Try not to say ‘eat’. ‘Have a meal’ may be better. Babies may be there at a meal with the rest of the family but may not be eating.

Take care that no child with an absent parent feels alienated from discussions. Where a parent is absent due to work, reassurance that the temporary absence does not invalidate a family may be necessary. Where a parent is absent for marital reasons, stress that the family is a unit of people who love each other and in that sense, a family under a single parent is just as complete a family as any other. But, please don’t bring up the subject. Only treat it if a child mentions it.

**Liturgy**

Gospel

*Explain that Jesus had wanted to be alone with his disciples but the large crowd wouldn’t let them be alone. The crowd was huge, five thousand men plus their families. Get them to imagine what a crowd that would be. Our church could take in a thousand -- Imagine five times the number! And, that’s only men alone.*

The Lord be with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Luke

(Lk 9:11-17)

Jesus made everybody welcome and talked to them about God; and he cured those who were sick.

It was late in the afternoon when the Apostles came to him and said, “Send the people away so that they can go into the villages and farms around here to find food and a place to sleep; for we are in a lonely place.” He replied, “Can’t you give them something to eat yourselves?” But they said, “We have only five loaves and two fishes. We will have to go and buy food for all these people ourselves.” There were about five thousand men. But he said to his disciples, “Get them to sit in groups of fifty.” They did so and made them all sit down. Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, raised his eyes to heaven and blessed them; then he broke them and handed them to his disciples to give to the crowd. They all ate as much as they wanted, and when the scraps remaining were collected they filled twelve baskets.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Dialogue**

Who has got a big family? Do you eat together often? When?

*Get them talking about their family. Ask about the occasions when they eat together. Do they like to eat with their family? Why? Explain that in our culture, eating is very important and eating together is even more important. We prefer to eat with people we like. Sometimes, if we refuse to eat with anyone, it is a sign that we don’t like them.*

What is this other family we belong to? Do we have a meal together as well? When? Where?

*Remember that the mass is not ‘like a meal’. It* is *a meal. Draw the parallels between the mass and the meal. There is a table with a tablecloth on it. The people try to gather round the table. They only succeed in getting everyone round the table if there are not too many people. There is food on the table. The priest washes his hands before preparing the meal. We say ‘grace’ before the meal to thank God for the food before we start and we thank God after we finish.*

*Draw parallels between the meal at home and the meal at mass.*

*In the Church, to take communion with someone else is a very deep sign of unity with that person. We say we are in communion with that person. The use of the same word in both contexts is significant. That is why the Church does not allow non-Catholics to receive communion as to do so would be to recognise them as Catholics, with all the accompanying implications as to faith, morals, principles, way of life, and fundamentally, identity as a people. Even in cases where a Christian is close to us in faith, except in dire need, communion will be denied. This is not to say that our Christianity is exclusive. We just don’t want our oneness to be diluted.*