

MONDAY
26 JULY
Exodus 32:15-24.
30-34
Psalm 106:19-23
Matthew 13:31-35

TUESDAY
27 JULY
Exodus 33:7-11;
34:5-9. 28
Psalm 103:8-12
Matthew 13:36-43

WEDNESDAY
28 JULY
Exodus 34:29-end
Psalm 99
Matthew 13:44-46

THURSDAY
29 JULY
Exodus 40:16-21.
34-end
Psalm 84:1-6
Matthew 13:47-53

FRIDAY
30 JULY
Leviticus 23:1. 4-11.
15-16. 27. 34-37
Psalm 81:1-8
Matthew 13:54-end

SATURDAY
31 JULY
Leviticus 25:1. 8-17
Psalm 67
Matthew 14:1-12

REFLECTION

God is holy and abhors sin but is also merciful and forgiving, characteristics which are difficult to hold together as our Old Testament readings reflect. God longs to build a relationship with the Israelites, but a holy God requires a holy people and so the Lord gives them the Law to teach them how to live. However, they cannot live up to God's standards. Even while Moses is receiving the Law, they are making an idol to worship.

God is incensed at their sin but still shows mercy. The Israelites are given another chance and receive fresh tablets of the Law. But they cannot come close to the Lord, too vast is the gulf between them and the Holy One. Instead God communicates through an intermediary, Moses, who so radiates God's glory after being with the Lord that he must wear a veil because the Israelites cannot look on such holiness.

It is not until Jesus' death on the cross that sin is finally dealt with and the chasm between God and humanity overcome. As the apostle Paul writes, when one turns to Christ, "the veil is removed" (2 Corinthians 3:16). How blessed are we that we can all now draw near to God!

PRAYER

Dear Lord, help us to fully appreciate your forgiveness and understand that we can now approach your throne with boldness, because of what Christ has done. When we struggle to let go of guilt and be confident in your forgiveness, please help us to know your healing.



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THE EUCHARIST

PART II – THE EARLY CHURCH TO THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

When Constantine adopted Christianity as the official Roman religion, the Eucharist moved from private homes into the public sphere, became influenced by court ceremonial and eventually took place in specially designed buildings. Extemporary prayers led by the presiding bishop expanded to include the text we know as the Sanctus (beginning "Holy, holy, holy, Lord...") as well as an account of the Last Supper, the institution narrative, following 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, augmented by prayers that those present might benefit from the sacrament.

As the public nature of worship drew ever larger crowds, the elements of bread and wine gained increasing centrality as the locus for Christ's presence. This precipitated the introduction of specific prayers for their consecration, that they become Christ's body and blood. The Roman rite introduced these into the long Eucharistic prayer before the institution narrative, but the Eastern Church also added an extra petition for the descent of the Spirit, called the *epiclesis*. For the West the story of institution was considered to be all that was required; for the East the *epiclesis* was also necessary. Thus liturgies began to diverge.

Reverence before Christ present in bread and wine flourished, prompting major changes in practice, including the addition of fresh symbolic gestures, though the general congregation began to receive communion less frequently. Shifting the altar table from its central position among the people to a separate, screened-off space heralded increasing exclusivity. Only those deemed worthy were now graced by reception of the sacred elements.

While initially only bishops presided at the Eucharist, as Christianity spread local priests took over the role. By the medieval period priests were praying the liturgy for and not with the people, using Latin, a language the majority didn't understand, saying the most sacred texts inaudibly, often out of sight. The congregation was reduced to passive observers who received communion twice a year only, and even then they were denied the wine in case it was spilled. Matters were ripe for change.

LIVE
 the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
 THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
 Caroline Hodgson
 and
 Heather Smith



Eighth week
 after Trinity

Monday 26 July to
 Saturday 31 July
 2021

WEEK