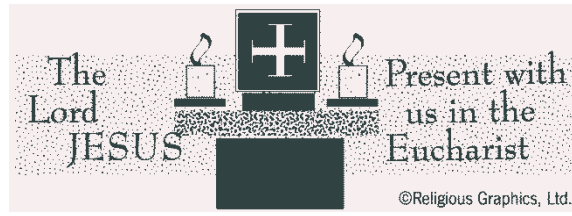


Body and Blood of Christ



Today's readings dwell on the meaning of blood and the family obligations that result from blood bonds.

In the first reading, the young men acting as cultic assistants did so as prior to the establishment of the hereditary priesthood. The altar acted as the surrogate of God. The twelve pillars were the surrogates of the tribes, the people. The common blood poured on both established the common bond.

In the second reading, "the greater and perfect tent" is the heavenly counterpart to the earthly sanctuary. The "eternal spirit" is not the Holy Spirit but the spiritual aspect of Christ's sacrifice in contrast to the sacrifices of the Jewish cult. Human conscience is the inner sanctuary where Christ's atoning sacrifice has its effect. Dead works are sins.

The Gospel relates the Eucharistic institution. Reminiscent of the feeding of the multitudes, Jesus *takes, blesses, breaks, and gives*. The broken pieces of bread symbolize the disciples' sharing in Jesus' self-offering. By drinking the cup, they enter into a covenant relationship with Jesus.