

Holy Thursday
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Holy Thursday Reflection

Tonight we celebrate a meal - we eat together and the food we eat becomes our shared life.

From the beginning of humankind, meals have had an important part of all human situations. In the earliest days they signified contracts with one another. An agreement between 2 people or tribes was legalized, not with a signed document, but with a meal. For eating the same food joined you together in your very humanity.

Even in the poorest areas of our world, hospitality means sharing food. No matter how little food there is, it is shared.

Meals everywhere are integral to a celebration - Birthdays, Baptisms, Anniversaries, graduations, holidays - all mean coming together and that means food is shared - from barbecues to cakes and in our church - cupcakes!

For the Jewish people in Egypt, having a meal before their departure was clearly spelled out - and remembered for all the years and centuries to come, for it meant the Presence of God was in their midst.

Jesus built on that, but took it to a deeper level of meaning --- actually 2 deeper levels of meaning.

At this meal - he took a towel and basin of water to wash their feet - a service provided to those who arrived to share this meal. We always talk about this as Jesus giving a lesson in service - which it was, but goes even deeper than that.

There is an intimacy in washing and drying another's feet or hands, that is - if we are aware! Looking into another's eyes while you respectfully - reverently dry their feet or hands - or surrender to another doing it -

creates a moment of meaning between 2 people. One can see the other in a way that goes beyond just a "name" - it is a moment that reaches into an inner space - beyond words and to the meaning of life itself.... You are there for another~

That is also what Jesus was giving to those at that supper - He was there for them - with all that He was -- and would be given for them.

When he took the Bread -- looking at it - pouring himself into the meaning of bread - sustenance for the body -- but now His Presence in what we need for life

He said: "Take this - All of you and eat of it.... For this is My body
which will be given up for you"
in other words:

Eat of this - take Me into yourself - Let me be bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh
so that you may share My life - given for you and for all others....

I will dwell in you and your acceptance of that will unite us - as one -
and you will know My love for you and all others.

Your life and service will reveal to all people Who I - Your God - AM.....

Then taking the cup of wine - grown from the earth - pressed and crushed together - aged...

He gave them to drink saying:

This is the cup of My Blood - poured out for you and all people, to show the
Mercy of God in Forgiveness.... Do this to remember Me!

Let all that I AM - All that I've given - flow through you - to bring life into your blood and
Mercy into your heart and Forgiveness into our world...

.....
Tonight we sit together - I ask you to look at our children, here with you....As your eyes take in
their innocence and young vibrant life - Let your mind reach out beyond -

To the children of the war-torn countries - of Yemen - Syria - the Congo - Sudan
scared children who are hungry - injured - lost....

To the children in the poverty areas of our own cities - where streets are dangerous..
frightened children who fear the loss of life daily - for themselves or their families..

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Look at the families here tonight.... here in the safety of our parish family -
they have worries they hide - are stretched so far in many ways...look at them -
and embrace them....

Let your minds reach out to those trying to leave areas of war - torture - in boats crossing
dangerous waters - to countries that don't want them...

Mothers, fathers, holding their children and helpless to make life safe for them...

These too are bone of your bone - and flesh of your flesh....

These too flow through the arteries of your body -

united to you by the life we share as humans... and within the Presence of God!

Feel the connection - for it is real - and the Body and Blood of Christ that we eat and drink
unites us to each other as we all become - literally - the Body of Christ.

Those words at Communion - which you hear as you hold out your hand to receive -
to accept - and reply: *AMEN!* meaning *This true!*

These join us to every human being in creation-

These words - this *Receiving of the Body of Christ* - unites us and opens us
to a new level of consciousness - *We are One!*-

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No matter how small our ways of caring for others - first in prayer - and whatever ways we
can offer - a smile - a meal - a conscious way of looking at another person and

seeing a Presence within - is critical for our world!

The first and most revolutionary way Jesus gave us at this Meal is to allow ourselves to be open to His level of love that exists for every person! What is easy for those like us - for those we care about - needs to be extended to all people.

Jesus is asking us to look at each person as He sees them....
of course - we aren't ignorant of the pain and violence that exists...
but seen through the eyes of His love - can we allow an openness within us for the hope and mercy God has for them - and withhold condemnation?

In the Garden that followed that meal - Jesus agonized in this very experience - and chose Non-violence and Trust to lead him to the Acceptance and Hope He placed in His Abba....

Can we do that? Can the nourishment of this meal strengthen us to try in little ways each day - to become the Image and Likeness of the God we so love?

Tonight is the measure of the Trust Jesus has in us - to become and reveal His Presence in our time and place....

We are the Body of Christ - We are not alone - We can do this!