

Thursday of the Lord's Supper 2019

One. The three readings from Scripture we just heard are magnificent, each in its own way. From the book of Exodus, the Lord's own prescriptions for how the Passover supper is to be prepared and celebrated. The blood of the slaughtered lamb acts as protection for the Israelites. Its roasted flesh is their feast. From Paul's Letter to the Corinthians, the brief but intense narrative of Jesus' own words and actions as he celebrated this Passover supper with his disciples "on the night he was handed over." With the bread and wine of the meal Jesus establishes a new covenant in his blood and in his flesh. In the Gospel, the stunning story of Jesus, rabbi and master, carefully washing his disciples' feet and acting like their servant.

Two. What we heard in all three readings will turn into ritual action now. On this altar we will celebrate the same Passover supper described in the book of Exodus, that supper now brought to fulfillment by repeating the very actions and words of Jesus described for us in the second reading. We know what this action accomplishes. St. Paul told us, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes." And what we heard in the Gospel also will become ritual action as I wash the feet of twelve disciples. Jesus said, "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." The model, of course, is not the ritual so much as it is the ritual's meaning. We must lay down our own lives in service of one another as Jesus has done for us. In all these ways the presence of Jesus Christ in our assembly this evening intensifies. Already present in the word proclaimed, he invades our very bodies and hearts in these ritual actions now.

Three. Let's reflect for a few moments on the language of the various prayers for this liturgy, for they represent a deep theological pondering of all that is given us by God through this liturgy's scriptural words and this liturgy's ritual actions. They are centuries old, now translated into English, and represent beautifully the Church's eucharistic faith.

A mouthful. Language which traps
over itself in the presence of mystery
Collect.

4
= different names for Eucharist

O God, who have called us to participate
in this most sacred Supper,
in which your Only Begotten Son,
when about to hand himself over to death,
entrusted to the Church a sacrifice new for all eternity,
the banquet of his love,
grant, we pray,
that we may draw from so great a mystery,
the fullness of charity and of life.

We address God as the one who has called
us to participate in these.
all given as Jesus is handing himself
over to death

- Our participation enables us to
draw from (as from a well) the source
that will fill us with charity and
life itself.

Prayer Over the Offerings

Grant us, O Lord, we pray,
that we may participate worthily in these mysteries,
for whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is celebrated
the work of our redemption is accomplished.

- Again, the theme of participating
- Doesn't God know this? Does he
need us to tell him? No, but
when we tell him, then he sees we understand.

Through Christ our Lord.

MEMORIAL

the whole work of the Paschal Mystery -
for our redemption

Preface

For he is the true and eternal Priest,
who instituted the pattern of an everlasting sacrifice
and was the first to offer himself as the saving Victim,
commanding us to make this offering as his memorial.
As we eat his flesh that was sacrificed for us,
we are made strong,
and, as we drink his Blood that was poured out for us,
we are washed clean.

- the word "Priest" is introduced
- the sacrifice is always present, forever
being offered
He is priest, but he is also Victim
memorial in its technical technical sense

Prayer after Communion

Grant, almighty God,
that, just as we are renewed
by the Supper of your Son in this present age,
so we may enjoy his banquet for all eternity,
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

There is a banquet in eternity prepared for us, toward which we are pointed and predestined by the sacraments we celebrate on earth. At tonight's banquet the blood of the Lamb protects us from Satan, the enemy close on our heels. And so in this age we eat as those in flight. But at that eternal banquet, Jesus who hands himself over for our sake on this night, is dying so that at the eternal banquet he can say to us "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord finds watching when he comes. Amen I say to you, he will seat them at his table and he himself will wait on them."