

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Feast of Corpus Christi

By: Fr. Bob

Shortly after undergoing major surgery, a woman decided to put her thought in writing. She wrote: "When someone said that when Jesus referred to the Passover wine as his blood, and then shared it with his disciples, he was being cannibalistic, I could not help thinking of the modern practice of giving blood by transfusion. While it isn't eaten, the blood is definitely taken into the body in a life-giving way.

"After surgery I had a vivid experience of this type of life-receiving from a blood transfusion. All day, in the recovery room, my only conscious feeling was the awful coldness, in the middle of summer. Nothing seemed to bring warmth to my body. I was inert and completely uninterested in anything going on around me.

"I finally was aware of a timing of two hours which seemed to be the time taken for the careful dropping of this blood into my veins. Suddenly, I felt warmth pour over me right out to my fingertips and to the ends of my toes. I seemed to come up from the bottom of the sea. I felt like smiling and greeting someone.

"I opened my eyes. The first thing I did was to find a clock. This seemed to relate me to my own real world. I was amazed that it was nearly midnight and I was elated to think I was alive and warm and happy.

"Then I saw the doctor and I couldn't help joking with him about keeping such awful hours. I heard him say, 'Now you can go home,' so everything was all right.

"Later, I felt I would give anything I own—anything—to find the stranger whose blood had brought this warmth, this life to me. Now I walk the streets, grateful to some unknown person whose very blood flows in my veins and contributes to my daily joy. This is a debt I can never repay."

We celebrate this feast of Corpus Christi—a doctrinal feast that reminds us of what we believe—that in fact we gather in a special way when we share the Eucharist. We gather knowing that our Lord and Savior Jesus is present with us. We know that this bread that will be presented in the Procession with the gifts has new meaning because of how we use it. This wine that might be like any ordinary wine that we might drink at dinner has new meaning because of how we use it. And we believe that it is Jesus that has given it new meaning—He has told us to do this—to gather and to pray and to share this bread and wine—in memory of him.

Thich Nhat the Vietnamese Buddhist monk had this thought on the Eucharist.

"One time", he said, "I meditated on the meaning of the Eucharist. Suddenly I found the message of Jesus so clear. The disciples had been following him, they had the chance to look at him, to look into his eyes, to see him smile, to see him in reality. But it

seems to me that they were not capable of being truly in touch with that marvelous reality. Then Jesus broke bread and poured wine and said, this is my flesh, my blood. Drink it, take it, eat it and you will have life eternal. I think the message is so clear," said Nhat Hanh," so clear even to a Buddhist monk!"

I think we can meditate on all these readings today—and on this feast and on our gathering and realize the power of this feast.

Notice that in the feeding scene in the Gospel—a story that is told six times in the Gospels, Jesus doesn't ask any questions of those who came to hear him teach and to witness his healing power. He set no prerequisites as to who would be fed or who was worthy of what he offered. Certainly the crowd had not been screened or interviewed or evaluated beforehand. Surely there were sinners among such a large gathering. Luke says there were 5,000 men; if the women and children had been counted, those who ate would have been far more numerous. Numerous, as well, would have been their faults and failures, their shameful thoughts, words, deeds, and decisions. Many of those present were probably numbered among the unclean by their self-proclaimed righteous contemporaries. Nevertheless, all were generously fed with the food that Jesus took, blessed, broke and gave. His was food for sinners that day in Bethsaida, and all the sinners ate their fill.

Perhaps as Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us we all spend a fair share of time with Jesus. We are after all baptized into Him. We would call ourselves his followers. We believe in His Word and way—that is why we gather here this morning. But we need help in recognizing him. We need help in understanding how he is present to us. We need help in knowing that He is not just IN this bread—or in the tabernacle—or in the Word spoken. Our reason for this feast—for this doctrine, perhaps, is to challenge us to expand our understanding of how large His presence is for us.

Our feast of The Body and Blood of Christ, I think, is supposed to jolt us into the realization that Jesus is present to us.

Jesus is present here in this assembly—our gathering together has new meaning because of him. We are not strangers sharing this place and time. We are his Body and Blood for one another—we are connected because of him.

Jesus is present in our sufferings and loss. We know because of him that we are not alone in the fears and doubts and afflictions and sickness. He heals us and feeds us and touches us.

Jesus is present in those people that confront us. Perhaps they are poor and homeless. Perhaps they are simply different from us—they dress differently—they think differently—they have lifestyles that are different from us. Jesus feed us through them—Jesus wakes us up to his presence in surprising places.

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Genesis 14:18-20

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Luke 9:11-17

June 2, 2013

靈 修 生 活

基 督 聖 體 聖 血 瞻 禮

陳日君樞機主教

讀經一：創世紀第十四章的這位撒冷王兼司祭、默基瑟德，是一位神奇的人物。

希伯來人書說他的名字，默基瑟德，意「正義之王」，撒冷王則就是「和平之王」，他無父無母、無族譜，生無始、壽無終，他好像天主子，永久身為司祭。

默基瑟德奉獻了餅和酒，祝福了打了勝仗回來的亞巴郎，亞巴郎承認他的地位，把戰利品的十分之一給了他。

默基瑟德奉獻了餅和酒，成了耶穌的預像。(聖詠一一〇)

餅和酒代表人生活裡的基本因素，奉獻餅和酒給天主表示承認祂是生命的主宰。餅和酒奉獻了後，又成為奉獻者的食糧，這食糧促成神——人的結合。

把吃的東西奉獻給神，然後分享神還給人的禮物，在很多宗教裡都有這構思，但在耶穌所創立的教會內，這一切被提升到更高一層。

讀經二：格前十一章廿三至廿六節。

在耶穌和宗徒進行最後晚餐時，神和人的關係有了一個突破，而且保祿宗徒強調那是他「由主所領受的，他也傳授給下一代」的，也就是說那是聖傳重要的一個環節。因主的話，餅成了祂的身體、將被犧牲的身體，酒成了血、將為救贖人類而傾流的血。

餅和酒成了祭品又成了食糧。世世代代的信徒能用這不流血的方法，重演那流血的祭獻。「你們每次食這餅、飲這杯，就是宣告主的死，直到主再來。」籍那流血的祭獻，救恩已完成了，當祂光榮再來時，救恩將圓滿地完成。

在兩者之間，有旅途中的教會。這教會是脆弱的，正如保祿苦心規勸的格林多團體，有錢的教友竟在聖餐時歧視窮人，使他們難堪。在保祿的心目中，基督奧體的合一和基督本身的完整一樣重要。分享同一個餅、同一個爵，應該把信徒們融合在一起，消除一切分歧。

福音：路九:11-17

本來三部對觀福音都記載了耶穌建立聖體的事跡，只有若望卻在耶穌增餅奇跡的機會上講了聖體的道理。現在教會在基督聖體聖血節上，要我們讀路加福音中的增餅奇跡(一方面當然因為在第二讀經裡已述說了建立聖體的事，另一方面看來是認同若望的觀點。) 那末，增餅和聖體究竟有甚麼關係？兩者都應驗了舊約的預言：默西亞時代天主款待窮人的宴席。

耶穌增餅時不少聽祂道理的人很興奮，以為默西亞來了，也就是解放的時候到了，默西亞會帶領他們擺脫羅馬人的統治。在路加的描寫裡也還留下一些這種「世俗化默西亞主義」的痕跡：「男人大約有五千……分五十人一組」，好像是在組成軍隊！

天主計劃中的解放卻是另一類的。那被犧牲的身體、被傾流的血，把人類從罪惡中解救出來，從此窮人(罪人) 能放心汲取救恩。

初期的教會深深了解增餅是聖體的先兆，甚至用聖體聖事的一些細節來描寫耶穌增餅時的行動：拿起五餅二魚，望著天，祝謝了，擘開，遞給門徒……

從若望福音(第六章) 我們知道那五餅二魚是一個小孩子供給的。天主的大能樂意求助於貧窮的人。我們的愛心能準備增餅的奇跡，能供給祭獻的禮品。聖體聖事能鞏固我們的善志，團結我們的心靈。這是多麼美妙的神人交往！

摘自「公教報」

本 週 讀 經

二零一三年六月二日

創 14:18-20 ; 格前 11:23-26 ; 路 9:11-17