

Feast of the body and blood of Jesus (B)

GOSPEL

+ Mark 14, 12-16 . 22-26

It was the first day of the Festival of Thin Bread, and the Passover lambs were being killed. Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal?" Jesus said to two of the disciples, "Go into the city, where you will meet a man carrying a jar of water. Follow him, and when he goes into a house, say to the owner, 'Our teacher wants to know if you have a room where he can eat the Passover meal with his disciples.' The owner will take you upstairs and show you a large room furnished and ready for you to use. Prepare the meal there."

The two disciples went into the city and found everything just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover meal.

During the meal Jesus took some bread in his hands. He blessed the bread and broke it. Then he gave it to his disciples and said, "Take this. It is my body."

Jesus picked up a cup of wine and gave thanks to God. He gave it to his disciples, and they all drank some. Then he said, "This is my blood, which is poured out for many people, and with it God makes his agreement. From now on I will not drink any wine, until I drink new wine in God's kingdom." Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Word of God.

HOMILY

06-07-2015

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Sociological studies note it with overwhelming statistics: Christians in our Western churches are abandoning the Sunday Mass. This celebration, as it has ended up being configured over the centuries, is no longer capable of nourishing their faith or of binding them to Jesus' community.

What's surprising is that we are letting the Mass «be lost» without finding this fact the least bit provocative of any reaction on our part. Isn't the Eucharist the center of the Christian life? How can we stay passive, unable to take any initiative? Why does the hierarchy stay so silent and paralyzed? Why don't we believers show our concern more forcefully and more grief-stricken?

The disinterest in the Mass is growing, even among those who participate in it as the ones responsible and committed to it. It's the heroic faithfulness of these minorities that is sustaining our communities, but can the Mass stay alive based only on protective measures that guarantee the fulfillment of the present ritual?

Questions are inevitable: Doesn't the Church need a more vital and incarnated experience on the Lord's Supper at her center, other than the one offered by current

liturgical practice? Are we so sure that we're doing what Jesus wanted us to do in his memory?

Is the liturgy that we keep repeating over the centuries the best way to help believers today to live what Jesus lived at that memorable meal where we find concentrated, remembered and manifested the how and the why of his life and death? Is the current liturgy the one that can best attract us to live as his disciples in the service of his project of the Father's Reign?

Everything today seems to oppose the reform of the Mass. No matter: each day such reform will be more necessary if the Church wants to live in vital contact with Jesus Christ. The journey will be long. The transformation will be possible when the Church feels more forcefully the need to remember Jesus and to live his Spirit. That's why it's all the more our responsibility not to abstain from the Mass, but to be a part of a conversion to Jesus Christ.

José Antonio Pagola
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HOMILY

06-10-2012

THE EUCHARIST AND OUR CURRENT CRISIS

All Christians know it very well. The Sunday Mass can easily become a "religious safe place" to hide from all our conflicts during the week. The Mass has almost become a meeting place to relax from the stress, problems and bad news that we have been subjected to during the week.

At times, we become sensitive to anything regarding the dignity of the celebration, but we easily forget about the significance and implications of the Lord's Supper. We don't like when the priest does not adhere strictly to the ritual celebration, but, at the same time, we follow the routine without ever responding to the summons of the Gospel readings.

The risk is always the same: we receive communion with our hearts without ever thinking about our suffering brethren, as if we had nothing in common. We share the Eucharistic bread while we keep ignoring the millions of brethren who don't have bread, justice or any kind of future.

In the next few years, the current crisis will get worse than anything we had feared. The endless list of measures and sacrifices that will be imposed on all of us will only serve to widen the existing inequality among most of us. People with whom we shared living standards will get poorer and their future will become more and more uncertain.

We shall soon see immigrants deprived of their medical assistance, sick people unable to resolve their health problems or buy medications; many families will be forced to beg for help from charitable organizations, their homes will be taken away, while young people will have no future. It is almost unavoidable. We shall have just a choice: either we become more and more selfish or choose to embrace Christian solidarity.

The celebration of the Blessed Eucharist in the midst of this crisis might be a chance for us to become conscientious about our brothers and sisters. We need to get free from our

selfish culture in which we have grown accustomed to think only of our own interests and learn to become more humane and generous. The whole Eucharistic mystery is orientated towards building up a human family.

It does not make any sense listening every Sunday of the year to the Gospel of Jesus, without answering to his repeated calls. We cannot go on praying to our Father to give us “our daily bread” without ever thinking of the millions of children and other people who cannot get it. We can’t go on receiving Holy Communion without becoming more generous by showing true solidarity with the victims of our crisis. Finally, we cannot exchange the Christian sign of peace without giving also a hand to those who are suffering most the effects of our crisis.

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HOMILY

06-14-2009

THE LORD’S SUPPER

(See homily 06-07-2015)

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