

Homily for Maundy Thursday, April 17, 2014

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From the Jewish Prayerbook, *Gates of Prayer*:

*Days pass and the years vanish and we walk sightless among miracles. Lord, fill our eyes with seeing and our minds with knowing. Let there be moments when your Presence, like lightning, illumines the darkness in which we walk. Help us to see, wherever we gaze, that the bush burns, unconsumed. And we, clay touched by God, will reach out for holiness and exclaim in wonder, "How filled with awe is this place and we did not know it."'*¹

Amen

Tonight we remember Jesus' last meal with his disciples before his death on the cross. Tonight we have heard the stories of the Passover, the institution of the Lord's Supper, and the washing of the feet.

From the Gospel according to Luke, "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"²

This is Jesus Christ's command that we hear every Sunday. I think it can sometimes drift past us without reflection. What does it mean?

We understand that this is Jesus' command to break bread together and to share the cup of wine together, but I think we understand that it is more than that.

The word "remembrance" tells us something. It is different from the word "remember." We use the word "remember" everyday. We "remember" to do things like getting the groceries. We "remember" what we did yesterday. We "remember" dates and facts, but "remembrance" is something more. The Greek word that we are translating is "Anamnesis," and it implies something more than an intellectual exercise of remembering, and our use of it goes back to the Hebrew which has its roots in the Passover feast.³

Here, “Remembrance” implies participating in the breaking of the bread with Christ and his followers. When we go to the altar rail and kneel taking the bread and drinking from the cup, we participate in the communion with Christ, his disciples, and with all Christians. Christ becomes present to us in the Eucharist.

Having taken communion together and received Christ, we carry the realization of Christ – who is God -- with us. This shared experience becomes our shared life as we recognize Christ in each other and we see Christ in the faces of those who visit our parish, or those who need help, and in our friends, neighbors, and even strangers in our daily lives – perhaps especially in strangers.

Jesus’ command to “love one another just as I have loved you” is the substance of our “remembrance.”

I have one last meditation to leave with you.

When we gather to break bread together and to share in the cup of blessing, we participate in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That also means that every moment of your life is made Holy as you live with Christ in your heart.

¹*Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayerbook for Weekdays, and at a House of Mourning.* New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1975. Print.

²Anderson, Bernhard W., Bruce M. Metzger, and Roland E. Murphy. "Luke 22:19." *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books.* New York: Oxford UP, 1991. N. pag. Print.

³Mitchell, Leonel L. *Praying Shapes Believing: A Theological Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer.* Minneapolis: Winston, 1985. Print.