

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

I love the fact that as Catholics we believe that Christ is present in ordinary gifts of bread and wine blessed and offered at the Eucharist. We don't just believe that Christ is present in sunrises, sunsets and in natural beauty, we also believe that God comes to us in a special and unique way in the simple, ordinary things of life. And it is in what we do with these gifts of bread and wine that Christ is really present. The earliest Christians called the Eucharist "the breaking of the bread." It is the broken bread and the poured cup given into our hands to which we say "Amen" and so affirm our belief that Christ is present here.

We often need to be reassured of Christ's presence when we are in the desert periods of our own life. We can feel we are wandering around in the wilderness looking for some sign of God's life. For all of us who are broken in mind, body or spirit, or who are pouring ourselves out in love for other people, communion is precisely the time Jesus meets us where we are. Is it any wonder that the Eucharist means so much to us? May we never feel as though we are not good enough to be here, for Jesus has invited us to his table where we are loved and cared for.

As important as the Eucharist is, however, it is not "ours", in the sense that we can selfishly hold on to the gifts we receive here. We are given Christ in Word and Sacrament, so we can become Christ.

In a sense Jesus says the same thing in today's Gospel when he talks about how the Father draws people to faith. Sometimes we can fall into the trap of thinking that faith is only an intellectual exercise. As important as good thinking and the power of strong arguments might be, the truth of faith is best demonstrated on an emotional and intuitive level when others see the power of God's saving love active in the way we live our lives. This is what really captures people's attention, and draws them to ask what gives our lives this quality, direction, purpose and meaning.

So may this respite from the journey of faith dispel our fears, revive us for the task ahead and enable us to live as though the only Bible others will read will be our lives, and the only Sacraments that will captivate them and draw them to Christ will be our justice and joy.

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