

TUESDAY COMMUNION

Hymn:

Reading: Mark 14. 22-25

Prayers:

I remember the last Christmas lunch we had with my dad.
He was 91 and was going to be 92 four days later.
He was physically frail though still very alert.
He knew it would probably be his last Christmas.
He chose to say grace at our lunch
- and it was just a short prayer of thanksgiving:
 • for the coming of Jesus into our world
- and the hope that he gave to us
 • for family and friends
- and all the blessing so this life
 • for the food that nourishes and sustains us.

We had many meals with Dad,
- we heard him pray on many occasions,
- but that prayer and that meal remains fixed in our minds.

The truth is, I can't remember precisely what he said
- and my memory of that meal is in part
a result of what happened a month later
- when he quietly slipped away from this life
- into the eternity of God's love.

We can't now know precisely what happened
- and what was said at that Last Supper.
Indeed, part of the richness of remembering that meal
- is that it becomes an occasion
- with so many layers of meaning for us.

Certainly, "Thanksgiving" was an important part of that meal
- as it would have been at every meal.
Even in the darkest hour Jesus gives thanks to God
- and in that thankfulness there is the trust
- that ultimately God will give them the victory
- over all that speaks what is false,
- over seeming defeat and the sadness of death.

We don't know whether bread and wine
- was all that was on the table that night.

Certainly, if it was a Passover Meal
- there would have been other food upon the table

- but the tradition which arose in the church was to concentrate
- on the bread and the wine.

Bread is the very staff of life

- and a very traditional Jewish prayer declares:

**- “Blessed art thou, Lord our God, King of the Universe,
- who bringest forth bread from the earth.”**

Those who eat together share in the kindness and generosity of God

- who gives to them all food to nourish them!
-
- When we take our communion we do so
- as those who are part of the whole human race,
- as those who are united to one another through Jesus,
- who binds us together as his people
- through his self-giving love.

But bread also represents Jesus himself.

When he says, “Take, this is my body”

- he seems to be saying that whenever they gather together
- and break the bread as a company of his friends
- he will be there with them.

Still he will be their Lord and friend

- to guide them and strengthen them,
- to teach them and to renew them in love.

Today, we remember not absent Lord

- but one who is present as we take the bread and drink from the cup.
-

As Charles Wesley writes:

***Our hearts we open wide
To make the Saviour room.
And lo, the Lamb, the Crucified,
The sinner’s friend is come.***

Wine was only drunk on special occasions.

Mark, in his tradition, links the wine with the blood Jesus shed

- and links it with a new covenant, a new commitment
- that God makes with his people.

That new commitment is seen in the life and death of Jesus,

- a total self-giving in love for the whole world
- and all its people.

For our part, when we share in this meal,

- we accept our responsibility to live no longer for ourselves
- but to live as those who continue the work of grace
- that Jesus began.

We go from here to love and to serve,

- remembering that for Jesus those who needed him most

- were those the world counts as being of no significance,
- the failures, the lonely, the unwanted.

So we eat and drink with our Risen Lord today
- following where he has gone before us. Amen.