

20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
August 16, 2015

**“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.”**

*God's Justice=Perfect Love*

For Jesus, with His full knowledge of His divinity and His humanity, His stating that He is the Bread of Life is quite significant. In fact, it is here that we have the explanation of what will become the Eucharist.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter of John, we have the washing of the Apostles' feet at the beginning of the Passover Supper, or Last Supper. It is here where Jesus says, “I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.” It is here where the Bread of Life Discourse, and all of the actions of Jesus now become a model for the Apostles going forward.

So... what does the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus saying He is the bread of life and the washing of feet have to do with justice or love?

Actually... it has EVERYTHING to do with justice and love. God, we know, is both just and merciful. He is just inasmuch as He has always been faithful to His covenants with us. He is merciful in that as many times as we as humankind have broken those covenants, He has never abandoned us. In fact, in perfect love and mercy, He sent His Son to take on our sins. Jesus then left a part of Himself with us when He gave the Apostles a model to follow. That part of Himself He left is the Eucharist.

When we celebrate... or partake... of the Eucharist, we are doing a number of things. First, we are acknowledging that we are sinners. We are acknowledging that we need God to be full human beings. Secondly, we are acknowledging that there is something that is missing within us because of our sins. Each time we sin, we lose a part of our relationship with God. It may be just a minor crack, or it could be a full rupture. The problem is that the wider that crack becomes, the farther we move ourselves away from our only source of life... God. Thirdly, we acknowledge that there is only one way to repair and regain our full relationship with God... and that is by allowing Him into our innermost being, as well as have the most urgent intention to repair the brokenness and separation.

It is due to our own failings as human beings sinning that the Eucharist exists. Let's face it... if someone we loved wronged us over and over again, how willing would we be to not only forgive each and every time, but then sacrifice our own offspring for their own well-being? Since God did this, His love for us is truly perfect. Justice merely means that we get what the covenant, or contract, states we get. God goes the extra mile, and gives us chance after chance after chance to live up to our end of the bargain. If we do, we ultimately gain eternal life and residence with Him for eternity. If we don't, despite all of the chances we have, we can lose this chance at salvation that Christ offers us. God won't take it away... it's merely that we have chosen against it, and in His perfect love for us, He won't force something on us that we don't want.

God's justice then, is different from human justice as we know it. However, it doesn't have to be. If we lived by God's principle of justice, which Jesus shows us repeatedly in the 4 Gospels, how different would the world be? In last Thursday's Gospel reading from Matthew 18, Jesus is asked by none other than St. Peter as to how many times we are to forgive someone who sins against us. St. Peter suggested 7 times. Jesus' admonishment in reply was '77 times,' which was a symbolic number at the time, meaning infinitely. If we put this into practice in our daily lives... or even made it our goal to do so and make steps in that direction, how much pain, suffering, alienation and loneliness would be eliminated? If society took on this view of justice, just how vastly different would our political process be? Our criminal justice system? On an international level, if the world were to take on this view of justice, how many wars would never happen? Terrorists would not exist. WMDs would be unnecessary.

The sad fact of the matter is that we live in what we have inherited as a fallen world. While we cannot change the world, we can change OUR world. We can temper our lesser instincts and emotions and look at the other person's side in a disagreement. If we are wronged, we can forgive, and not retaliate.

Make no mistake, this does not mean by any stretch that we don't hold people accountable for the natural consequences of their actions. Forgiveness of someone for theft against us, for example, does not eliminate the duty to pay back what was taken by the perpetrator. It DOES mean that we don't exact any other type of revenge against them, though.

Justice, coupled with mercy, is part of God's created design. He has taught us this through His Son, and as part of that, we have the Eucharist. Jesus Christ is indeed the bread of life. If we truly and worthily consume Him and allow Him to change us from within with His flesh, which is real food, and His blood, which is real drink, we will also willingly share His merciful justice with others. God's justice is perfect love. While we may not live this perfectly, we should move toward it as our goal and then and only then will Christ truly remain in us and us in Christ.