

## **Sermon for Maundy Thursday C 2010**

### **The Eucharist for which we gather is a reality past and present and future**

Few phenomena like that in our world

In our small-mindedness, we choose between past and present and future much of the time

### **I am a historian; the past claims me**

I venerate tradition in many ways

Some more than me; many are so committed to the past that they find little to appreciate in the present.

Think of a museum that exhibits relics of the past.

Some of our lives are like that.

### **We know other persons and institutions for whom the present is all.**

This is the way of many a young person,

What will I do this Friday night being the highest concern.

Much reinforced by technology.

The past is quickly forgotten.

No good at waiting, not even good at remembering that the future is coming.

### **And we know others who lives are subjected to the future**

Some are seized by fear about it; they mitigate by planning and prudence.

Perhaps so much that their present is ruined.

Others wish their lives away daydreaming about the future, neglecting the wonder of the present.

### **Christian people at the Lord's table hold the triple reality of past, present, and future together.**

### **Or let us say that the Lord Jesus who hosts this meal holds the triple reality of time together, he who is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.**

### **It was a meal of memory and history which he hosted in the Upper Room**

The Passover meal, the meal that re-minded Israel of God's mighty acts in the Exodus.

A meal of remembrance it said in the lesson from Exodus,  
roasted lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread

A meal on the run, to remember the night that God saved Israel from Pharaoh's exploitation and injustice.

Our Lord who was about to perfect God's saving story with his people looked back that night at the beginning of the salvation story.

**And we look back each time at the table, not so much to the first Passover in Egypt but now to the second Passover of the Cross,**

When Jesus became our Paschal lamb, sacrificed for the sins of the world.  
What we do at the table is in remembrance;  
Our Lord's Supper looks back to the Last Supper and over both the Cross looms.

**If that Last Supper and this Lord's Supper are history meals, then surely they are in the present as well.**

To really be present in a given moment is not an easy thing.  
To be present without fearing or anticipating the future.  
To be present without remembering all the past hurts of life in relationship.  
But the Last Supper and this Lord's Supper are moments of the present and moments of presence.  
The Lord was saying to them "I am so glad to be with you, really with you at this table."  
"We have been together through so much and here we are at Passover, our last one together in this world. Let us savor the wonder of this present moment."  
At our supper he says something like in his wonderful presence.  
He says "Come unto me all you that work so hard and carry many burdens, meet me at the table where I will give you rest.  
Come out of the past, forgiven and forgiving, come into the present and my presence in the sacred meal.  
Be really and totally present here, as I am."

**And the Last Supper and our Lord's Supper look to the future as well.**

Indeed make the future a little bit present.  
Jesus said "You are those who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."  
Here gathered around the altar is foretaste of the Kingdom, when we will be gathered around the throne.  
Here we gather in humility to receive our small and equal portions, a foretaste of what the Kingdom will be like.

**St. Paul in the epistle captures the past, present, and future aspects of this feast,** when he says “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup [that the Lord ordained in the past], you proclaim [in the present] the Lord’s death until he comes [in the future].

**So for a moment here, we are in the Upper Room, at the table where the Lord is host.**

**And for a moment here, we are in the present most fully; we are more the church, more the people of God at this table than at any other time.**

**And for a moment here we are blessed with a fleeting glance of the Kingdom of God.**

**On the night before he died for us, our Lord gave us this gift.**

The church’s greatest treasure,  
the bread of angels,  
the cup of salvation,  
the feast of wholeness in Jesus.