



FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING-34C – November 20, 2022

2 Samuel 5:1-3; Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5; Colossians 1:12-20; Luke 23:35-43

Homily ~ Father Ed Hislop

Here we are, *your bone and your flesh...*," words from the Book of Samuel, which we hear, surrounded by these images of the many who have gone before us. Here we are, their bone and flesh, their love, struggle, faith, and hope. All handed on to us. Walking in their footsteps, we are here because of them and so many others *"from generation to generation, from the rising of the sun to its setting."*

We gather here, again, with all of them and with all the saints, around a single Table, summoned, called, and invited by God, each of us and all of us—to be here with one another, as we end the church year.

Here to proclaim and assent to the truth that Christ is the beginning and the end, King of the universe and Savior of the world. It is Christ who has summoned us; Christ who dwells among us, Christ who leads us, and Christ who remembers us, just as he remembered those who suffered with him on Calvary.

We end this year with our beloved around us, hearing from Luke the truth of Jesus on the cross, his body broken, his blood poured out, yet speaking a word of mercy and compassion, even among those who jeer, ridicule, and will not believe.

But we are not here to remember history, or events long past; nor are we gathered to merely remember the many in whose footsteps we walk. We are here to enter the very mystery of Christ, his life, death, and resurrection, *now*. We are here to enter, if only for a moment, the new eternal life of those who have gone before us, for, at this Table, they are with us and with Christ. This Altar, which we and the Church has always believed, is the Cross "perpetuated in mystery

throughout the ages;" it is the place from which Jesus, as in Luke's Gospel today, gently speaks to the many, to us, and those who surround us, *"today you will be with me in paradise."* At the altar, the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ is entered, and his body and blood is broken, poured, and given. There is the *"Table at which the Church's daughters and sons are gathered to give thanks to God and to eat and drink of the Body and Blood of Christ."* The altar is a sign of Christ himself, indeed, the *"Altar is Christ."* This is why it is kissed, bowed before, incensed, and honored.

To this table we bring gifts, which through the goodness and grace of God we have received: Bread, real bread, fruit of the earth and work of human hands—the work of our hands, which becomes the Bread of Life. Bread, with all that bread is meant to be and do. Wine, fruit of the vine and work of human hands, which becomes our spiritual drink. Wine, with all the festive joy and spirit that wine can bring; and the mercy, forgiveness, communion and hope it is meant to inspire.

At this Table we take our place with the Blessed Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Here we give thanks to the Lord our God because it is right and just! Here at this table, at this altar, we stand in baptismal dignity, *sharing in the priesthood of Christ*, with which we were all anointed as we came forth from the rushing waters of Christ's life-giving tomb, clothed in the white garment of ministry, sent to the Table of the Lord's Supper, *"made worthy, by Christ himself, to stand in his presence and serve."*

Here at this altar, we-WE-pray in thanksgiving; here, we-WE-offer; here WE call forth the Spirit

over the gifts WE have brought, that they may become the Body and Blood of the risen Christ. Fruit of the earth, fruit of the vine, the work of human hands becoming Christ in every way Christ now lives! Here we remember, here we “do” in the memory of Christ. Here the memory becomes present, lives in the moment, and defines the future. Here is Christ!

At this Altar/Table we are nourished with the Body and Blood of the Son of God, the crucified and risen Lord. One loaf broken and given, one cup poured and shared. At this Table we-WE-are filled with the Holy Spirit, to become one body and one spirit in Christ—all of us together. At this altar we *stand*, because we are worthy, with the whole Church, the whole human family, with the saints and all those whose images surround us and all who have gone before us “*from generation to generation, from the rising of the sun to its setting;*” here we become what we remember and what we do!

Still, like the criminal crucified with Jesus, we plead, “*you who take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us, mercy, mercy, grant us peace.*” “*Lord I am not worthy...*” But the word is spoken: the soul is healed, and the promise of paradise is given, **just given**. And so, we move—not alone, only together, a solemn movement, a procession of hope, hungry and thirsty we go, in solemn song we move, “*Like a deer yearning for running streams*” we long for Christ. We hunger and thirst, so, we eat *and drink*, bread and wine: Christ—body, blood, spirit, and life, for his flesh is real food, and his blood real drink. Then together, only

together, we become what we consume. We are told the “*Body of Christ,*” the “*Blood of Christ,*” and we say “*Amen.*” Let our “amen” be forever true, let us be the Body and Blood of Christ. May we stake our lives on it, for that is what our “amen” means.

At this table we eat and drink; eat and drink of the Body and Blood of the risen Christ, which we do in his memory. Here, *together* we become Christ himself. So, we sit in silence at so great a wonder. We, with the whole Church, have become the holy communion, the dwelling place of the risen Lord.

We are now the bread and the wine, the body and blood, the life and spirit; Christ is in us together, we are the “real presence.” Moving from here, we are sent to “out there,” to be broken and poured out in the work of loving service and gentle mercy; sent to promise paradise to all who seek to be remembered, “making peace by the blood of his cross.”

We end this Church year with Christ, as King, about to live again in and through us, because of what we do and of whom we eat and drink. “*Here we are, your bone and your flesh!*”

“*As baptized Christians, we are really and truly sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ. When we receive the holy eucharist, this union is most perfectly reached, for then we not only receive the King of Kings, in him we receive each other.*”*

“It is your own Mystery!”

Sources: General Instruction of the Roman Missal; Eucharistic Prayer III; Eucharistic Prayer II; The Order of Dedication of a Church and an Altar; Homily of St. Augustine +43 CE; Psalm 42/43: As a Deer Longs © 1988 Bob Hurd, OCP, Communion Procession.

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