



*What difference does it make if the bread and wine turn into the Body and Blood of Christ and we don't?"*

~Reverend Godfrey Diekmann, OSB

With those words, I concluded the homily last Sunday. Words which go to the heart of what we believe as Catholics, about what we do here in memory of the "Good Shepherd."

While each of us receive, with faith and gratitude, the body and blood of Christ, we only genuinely share in this eternal banquet *together*. It is never just you and me, coming to Communion, it is all of us together... here and in every place and among every people of this weary world. We process together in reverent song, not alone or silent, but together in song! We reverently bow before both the Body and Blood of the Risen Lord. We are sent forth only together, never alone.

It is not only "spiritual," it is always a flesh and blood gathering, body, mind and soul, a shoulder-to-shoulder meeting, an active participation of the many. We are here to do something and to become someone! We eat and drink to become the "Holy Communion," to become, in this time and place, the one of whom we eat and drink. Doing so, we are made, together, into "the Good Shepherd." Not a hired person, who acts only in his or her own interest; not those who run away when the challenges become great, or the powers of hatred or sickness become too much to bear.

In an age and time when we seem to be immersed in a sweeping storm of "individualism"—what I want to do, what I want to think, how I want to act, how I want to be free, how I can decide with only myself or my family in mind.

The reality and truth of our faith, and the action of our Eucharist, contradicts and challenges those false perceptions, which only

scatter and destroy the lives of too many. We are always both challenged and invited to think beyond ourselves, to act for the sake of others and to live not only as persons who believe but as a holy communion of people in search of those sent away, scattered, lost, forgotten or shunned; those sacrificed by the shared opinion of a few or sometimes even the many. A holy communion means becoming someone greater than any one of us alone.

Because of what we do here, of whom we eat and drink and who we become, our vision, our life and our action is always about the common good of all.

We can never be about "just taking care of our own," or finding safety among those who think and believe only as we. Our decisions about what we do or do not do, must never be just about ourselves or our own opinions, but must always be about the common good of all. We become what we eat and drink, the Holy Communion of Christ. This is what we believe and who we must trust we are.

The loss of the sense of the "Holy Communion," or relegating it only to church "concerns" or personal beliefs separate from the real issues and struggles of those scattered by the "wolves" of the day and times, has left too many alone, frightened, and judged, while those who do the scattering, worry only about their own safety and security.

So, our Holy Communion has made us, together the "Good Shepherd," whose vision is always the common good of all, whose life is always about the other, always about those lost, scattered or left alone.

*So, "as you exit this sacred spot hosting the Bread of Life, [and the wine of joyful mercy] pledge yourselves to be a kind of sacrament—a vibrant symbol that speaks to the fears and tears of a broken world. Vow not only to joy*

*with all whose laughter is richly human, but to weep with all those whose pain parallels your own.*

*Take the first step where dislike divides; be willing to walk the extra mile. Challenge courageously a resurgent rugged individualism where the strong and swift survive and the devil*

*takes those left behind. Such must you be, for sacraments are not magic..." Rev Walter J Burghardt, S.J. You, together, have become the good Shepherd longing to be with and for the lost.*

*"What difference does it make if the bread and wine turn into the Body and Blood of Christ and we don't?" ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.*

