

Body & Blood of Christ

Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14-16, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, John 6:51-58

Holy Family (805 words)

Last Wednesday I was fortunate to attend the ordination ceremony of the new Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane, Bishop Ken Howell. It was a magnificent occasion where people and the church of Australia gathered: his parishioners and friends from all over, Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and some I am sure who were just interested and love the church.

Our own Bishop Michael was one of the ordaining Bishops. There were hundreds of priests from all over. The procession was at the altar and there were still many walking from outside yet to enter. It was the church in all its magnificence and was a celebration of all its parts. I thought to myself as I looked at all the Bishops, priests and people, we need each other. Without all of these parts together, we are not the Roman Catholic Church which we profess to be a part of.

Last weekend we celebrated Confirmation and First Holy Communion in all our communities with our own Bishop: again the church celebrating the sacraments which bring us together and call us forward.

Throughout all the celebrations I remembered the importance of the priesthood I share. I remembered the connections, the people, the places, the celebrations, the sadness of loss, the joy of good times. Priesthood is making connections with God: with and for people and Eucharist is at the heart of this re-remembering of us and our world.

I think that is what tonight's celebration is about as we celebrate the Body and Blood of Christ: the remembering of who is important and being connected with them and with God. I think this is what St Paul is trying to say to the people of Corinth as well where he says: *You share the blessing of the cup of communion; the bread we break is a communion with the body of Christ.* We are connected with Christ and to those whom we love and care for in Christ; we become one in Christ and with each other.

People say church is boring and dull! It is only boring and dull if you do not bring anything or anyone forward to offer to Christ and to our world. If it is boring, we are being selfish, because we want something without giving anything of ourselves: we become takers and not givers. We can place ourselves before God and all that is going on; the connections of people who are in our lives; who is important; we place the connections we have made in our week of all the people in our lives; we become one and are in communion with each other and God. We are the Body of Christ when we do this.

We come, offer ourselves in the form of bread and wine, we bless, we break and are broken open to God and to each other. **We are becoming the Body of Christ and are the Body of Christ.** It is a most sacred and powerful story – Christ with us – in the Body and Blood of Christ – Communion. Christ who lives in me and we in Him.

At Eucharist there is a connectedness and belonging which we can experience and share with each other as a people and herein lies the beginnings and awaking of that miracle of God with us. In all its complexity what we are doing here is sharing in a simple, sacred meal: we gather around a table; we bring our experience of what is happening in our lives; we share with each other this experience; and we leave nourished for being here.

What happens here is not magic or it's not something only the priest does but is something that we all do together. We give of ourselves and bring it forward to this altar, remembering that Jesus gave his life for others and we try in our lives to do the same. We are all a part of this miracle of God being made present in the Eucharist.

This miracle of God's presence then spills over to our daily living: when we are discouraged; when we are unable to do the things we once could; when we are in pain from illness or sadness; when we have lost a loved one; the miracle of Eucharist says that God is with us – God does not leave us alone – God is present and around us giving us the courage and strength to carry on.

May our prayer be that we come to know God's love more intimately – so that it becomes a part of who we are as a giving people. We then are the living – **Body of Christ** – and thus are becoming Eucharist for each other – Broken and shared – poured out and given too many.