

A CALL TO EUCHARIST

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower.

2 He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit.

3 You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you.

4 Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

5 I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

6 Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned.

7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.

8 By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

9 As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love.

10 If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

11 "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

12 This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. (John 15:1-12)

Context:

Jesus is at the last supper with his apostles; here, knowing that He will be soon taken away from them, He shares with them His last will: that they may remain in him and love one another. Jesus' desire is that we, along with the apostles, may choose to remain in a deep communion with Him and with one another.

What means has Jesus chosen to maintain this Communion? The Eucharist.

Three words to understand: Sustenance-Sharing-Solidarity

Sustenance

"...Without me you can do nothing"

In these words there is a sense of powerlessness that might be compared to the weakness caused by lack of food. No physical food, no strength. Without eating we surely die. Jesus chose to remain among us to provide the spiritual food we would need to go about our earthly lives to face all the challenges of life and to grow in the maturity of our spiritual being that is, the maturity of love. Therefore the Eucharist is in the form of bread to signify the desire of Christ to be our sustenance. The wine represents the joy that this food provides that makes our burdens light and sweet.

St. Augustine says that while we eat an earthly food, our body assimilates it and makes it part of itself, since our body is stronger than food. However, when we consume the Eucharist, it is the Body of Christ that assimilates us into himself, since He is stronger than we are.

Sharing

"...Remain in my Love"

Another reason why Jesus instituted the Eucharist is that He might share with us not only what He has but even more everything He is. It is proper of Love to desire intimacy and communion. In the Eucharist the Lord can reach us in the very depths of our beings both physically and spiritually. We use the word Communion at times without realizing what actually that means: union with. When we receive the Host we do a real communion only when we try in the silence of our hearts to unite ourselves with our minds, souls and hearts, to our Creator and Savior. We can entrust Him our thoughts, feelings and desires so that He may transform them into His own.

Jesus has so much to give us and in those moments He desires us to ask Him for everything He wants to share with us.

Jesus said: "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

In the Eucharist Jesus has found a way to remain with us in our physical reality until the end of age.

Another way to prolong the sharing time with Our Lord is what we call "Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament". The Eucharist is the apparition of the Risen Lord in the very moment in which He is giving himself to us in sacrifice. It is the wounded heart of Christ that is pouring out his blood into the souls of those who come to adore Him. The miracles of healing that this powerful sacrament can perform for those who spent time in front of Him are numberless.

Solidarity

"...This is my commandment: love one another as I love you"

When we receive the Eucharist we are all partaking of the same food, and we are all assimilated in the same Body of Christ. The Eucharist creates unity. How can we build up this unity? The five words of love: love everybody, love first, love always, love right away and love with joy.