Where Two or Three are Gathered

Eucharist and Community

SEEK YE FIRST

Session 5

FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

Food is essential to our lives. Indeed, we become what we eat both physically and spiritually. Food and the ways we produce, distribute, and consume it have always been central to the story of life. It shapes our relationships to the land, to each other, to ourselves, and to the Sacred. From the beginning, food has been central to the Christian faith. It is no surprise then that virtually every church event is a food event.

Cathy Campbell

When we gather for Bible study, meetings, work, or worship, we share coffee, tea, and often a taste of something. We share food with others through meal programs, food pantries, food drives, community kitchens or gardens. We share bread and wine whenever we celebrate the Eucharist. Appreciating the place of food in our faith reveals much about our Christian story of salvation.

FOOD AT THE CENTRE (Paul)

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

According to JOHN

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” (The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” So Jesus said to them,) “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

According to ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER

Look at all my trials and tribulations
Sinking in a gentle pool of wine.
Don't disturb me now, I can see the answers
'Till this evening is this morning, life is fine.
Always hoped that I'd be an apostle.
Knew that I would make it if I tried.
Then when we retire, we can write the Gospels,
So they'll still talk about us when we've died.

JESUS (Rebuttal)

The end...
is just a little harder, when brought about by friends.
For all you care, this wine could be my blood.
For all you care, this bread could be my body.
The end! This is my blood you drink.
This is my body you eat.
If you would remember me when you eat and drink.
I must be mad thinking I'll be remembered.
Yes, I must be out of my head.
Look at your blank faces. My name will mean nothing
Ten minutes after I'm dead.
One of you denies me. One of you betrays me.

FICKLE MEMORY

<u>ANAMNESIS</u> (New dictionary of Liturgy and Worship)

- gk. word expressing a foreign concept,
- memorial, commemoration, remembrance
- **“an objective act whereby the person or event commemorated is actually made present, is brought into the realm of the here and now”**
- Role of Eucharistic Prayer - Storytelling

BAS notes – 3 Biblical images

the interpretation of Jesus' death as an act of vicarious suffering on behalf of the people on the analogy of the figure of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53,

the interpretation of Jesus' death as a sin-offering on the analogy of the expiatory sacrifices offered in the Temple, and

the interpretation of the death and resurrection of Christ as an act of divine deliverance from the power of sin and death.

(Speaking of Isaiah)

More Food for the imagination

Remember . . . That DOG is GOD spelled backwards):

ISAIAH – Jewish Roots

Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters; and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and **eat what is good**,
and delight yourselves in rich food (Isa 55:1-2).

BUT . . . How rich ??!

GLYCEMIC INDEX

Some examples of glycemic index	
Corn Flakes	112
All Bran	55
Oatmeal	70
Whole wheat bread	50-70
Pizza	85
Waffles	110
Spaghetti	50-60
Rice	110-120
Potato, cooked	80-85
Potato, mashed	104
Milk	40-50
Cola	97

Nutrition Facts
Valeur nutritive

Per 1 bowl (300 g) / Pour 1 bol (300 g)

Amount Teneur	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 440	
Fat / Lipides 19 g	**29** %
Saturated / Saturés 4 g + Trans / Trans 0.2 g	**21** %
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 35 mg	
Sodium / Sodium 860 mg	**36** %
Carbohydrate / Glucides 53 g	**18** %
Fibre / Fibres 4 g	**16** %
Sugars / Sucres 6 g	
Protein / Protéines 15 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	45 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	4 %
Calcium / Calcium	20 %
Iron / Fer	20 %

LAST (Good) SUPPER
(Not all suppers are GOOD)

"So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as (Jesus) had told them". And it ends in a garden **deep in the shadows of the cross to come**. It grows in the rich symbolic soil of the Passover. For the Passover is the feast of liberation that marks the journey of the people out from under the **oppression of the empire**. Yet the **tentacles of the empire**—betrayal, abandonment, anger, and fear—surround even this **banquet of wisdom** which foreshadows all the **meals of the church to come**. The seeds of evil are there even in Jesus' intimate circle:

MARK (Campbell)

Peter said to him, "Even though all become deserters, I will not." And all of them said the same (Mark 14:27, 29, 31b).

The banquet, then and now, is celebrated in the midst of the empire. It is sandwiched (pun) between the realities of sin: our fractured relationships with each other, God, and creation. This is the story of **life in the midst of death**, not **in spite of death**.

IDEAL and GOAL

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13:2

LET US BREAK BREAD TOGETHER

Nothing is more natural than for people to break bread together. Sharing food at table is one of the universal ways that relationships are created. Patterns of table fellowship can be studied to identify social groups: families, friendship networks, communities, and whole cultures. The word for the social patterns created by eating together is "**commensality**," which the dictionary defines as "fellowship at table; the act or practice of eating at the same table.

INFINITE VARIETY
and etiquette

There are family dinner tables, worksite canteens, buffet tables at community suppers, fancy restaurant tables, the simple rock or log of a picnic site, school cafeterias, soup kitchen tables, and church altars. The patterns of food sharing and the ethos of the group that gathers around each of these tables, its commensality, are different. What, then, is the commensality of the banquet table? **What is the table etiquette of God's hospitality?**

EFFECTS of PARTICIPATION

With grace we take our place at the table. With grace we consent to **the shaping of our lives by the food of the banquet table**: the Word of God that leavens the whole loaf of history.

As Dominic Crossan points out: "A feast for society's outcasts could easily be understood . . . as a benefaction." It could be understood within a tradition of benevolence as a charitable act of taking care of those in need. Yet, the "everyone" is provocative. It means **anyone** …

Dorothee Soelle, Jewish story

An old rabbi once asked his students how one could recognize the time when night ends and day begins. "Is it when, from a great distance, you can tell a dog from a sheep?" one student asked. "No," said the rabbi. "Is it when, from a great distance, you can tell a date palm from a fig tree?" another student asked. "No," said the rabbi. "Then when is it?" the students asked. "It is when you look into the face of any human creature and see your brother or your sister there. Until then, night is still with us."

MATTHEW 25 (to the nations)

(T)he king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ . . . Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

WE ARE TRANSFORMED

Night ends and day begins as our eyes refocus on what **connects** us rather than on what divides us. This is the **spiritual challenge of solidarity**.

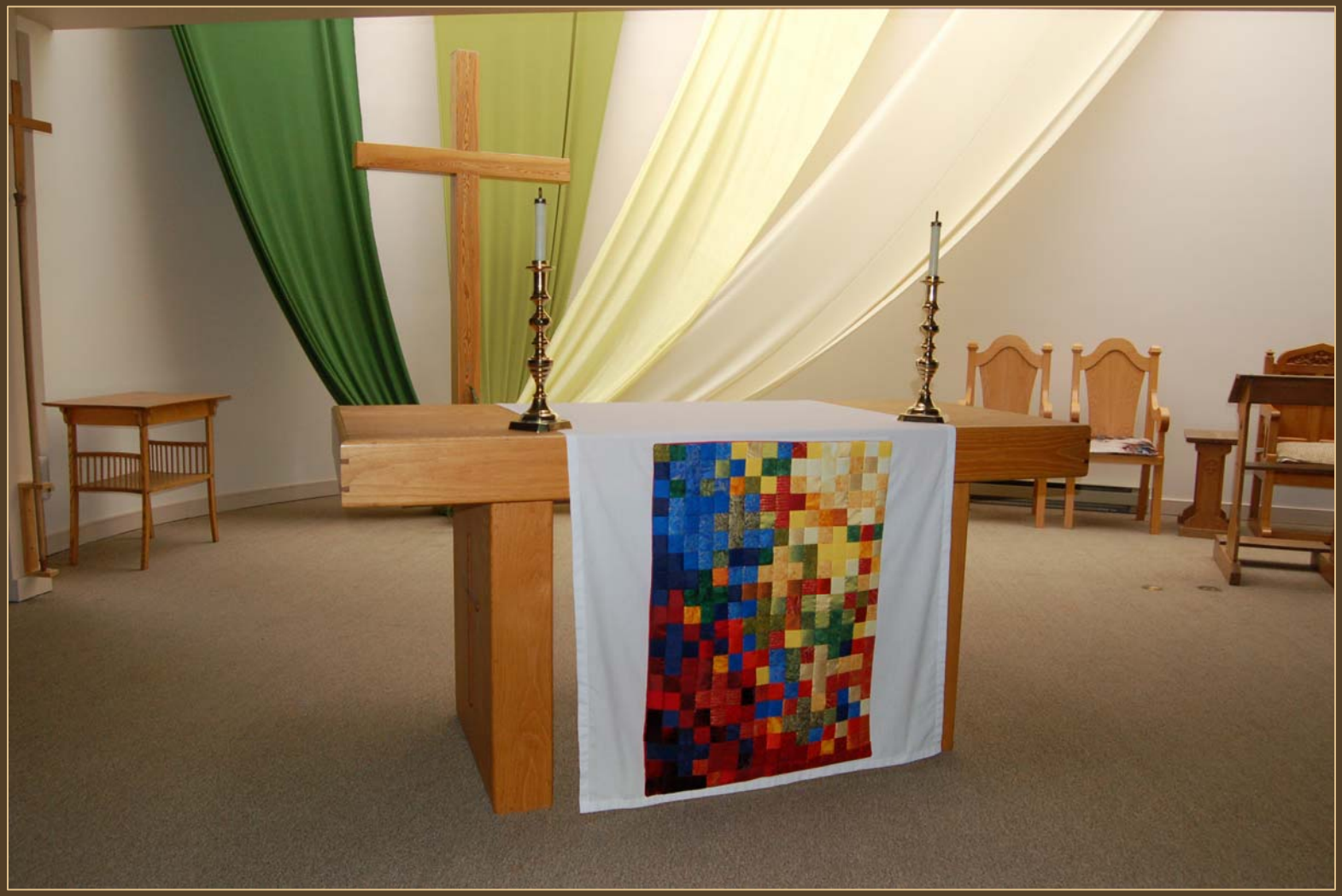
To work with others is not to lose oneself, but first and foremost it is to **find a larger self."**

As Douglas Meeks writes: "Those who live from the table of God's household are **no longer simply advocates** of those who struggle to live without what is necessary for life; **[we] have become brothers and sisters**."

WE PRACTICE THE OPEN TABLE HERE

As we learn to see with the eyes of solidarity, we learn to **practice genuine inclusive commensality**, to welcome the stranger to table, to build communities where all may flourish.

Duly cautious, then, about the seductiveness of practices of exclusion to the faithful, and concomitantly alert to the danger of a radical practice of inclusion, **our faith calls us to the etiquette of an open table**.



Invitation, Hospitality, and Pleasure

Wendell Berry on GRATITUDE

"Eating with the fullest pleasure, pleasure, that is, that does not depend on ignorance is perhaps the profoundest enactment of our connection with the world. In this pleasure we experience and celebrate our dependence and our gratitude, for **we are living from mystery, from creatures we did not make and powers we cannot comprehend.”**

DIX the famous quote

Was ever another command so obeyed? For century after century, spreading slowly to every continent and country and among every race on earth, this action has been done, in every conceivable human circumstance, for every conceivable human need from infancy and before it to extreme old age and after it, from the pinnacle of earthly greatness to the refuge of fugitives in the caves and dens of the earth. Men (sic) have found no better thing than this to do for kings at their crowning and for criminals going to the scaffold; for armies in triumph or for a bride and bridegroom in a little country church;

for the proclamation of a dogma or for a good crop of wheat; for the wisdom of the Parliament of a mighty nation or for a sick old woman afraid to die; for a schoolboy sitting an examination or for Columbus setting out to discover America; for the famine of whole provinces or for the soul of a dead lover; in thankfulness because my father did not die of pneumonia; for a village headman much tempted to return to fetich (animistic practice) because the yams had failed; because the Turk was at the gates of Vienna; for the repentance of Margaret; for the settlement of a strike; for a son for a barren woman; for Captain so-and-so wounded and prisoner of war; while the lions roared in the nearby amphitheatre; on the beach at Dunkirk;

while the hiss of scythes in the thick June grass came faintly through the windows of the church; tremulously, by an old monk on the fiftieth anniversary of his vows; furtively, by an exiled bishop who had hewn timber all day in a prison camp near Murmansk; gorgeously, for the canonization of S. Joan of Arc—one could fill many pages with the reasons why men (and women) have done this, and not tell a hundredth part of them. And best of all, week by week and month by month, on a hundred thousand successive Sundays, faithfully, unfailingly, across all the parishes of Christendom, the pastors have done this just to make the plebs sancta Dei—the holy common people of God.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

❖Just for fun, think or all the different places, circumstances and settings you consume food. Tell the truth. Include eating out, snacks, religious ceremonies, travel, nighttime settings, picnics, etc. How long is your list?

Recently, someone came forward to receive communion in our church. She almost sighed as she stood before me; later I asked her what happened. She said it was such a special moment that she had to prepare. What “happens for you” when you share the bread and wine in church?

When you think about the hospitality of our church, any church, even ‘the church down the road” what inspires you? Where and when have you felt welcomed? (and the opposite) How did this happen? Are there lessons we can learn from this experience?