



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

Mass of the Lord's Supper

Tonight the incomparable gift was given

Readings: Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14, Ps 115, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, John 13:1-15

What draws us inexorably to the mystery of the Mass? Tonight is the celebration of the institution of the Eucharist, the Mass, the sacramental certainty of communion with God in Christ. It is what sets Catholics apart as the original, ancient and Apostolic Church.

Many other churches have their own understandings. At an ecumenical meeting I once met a United Reform minister of, what I knew to be, a failing church. She claimed to have 35 communicants every Thursday afternoon. It turned out that, at the end of the popular, free pensioners' lunch, they were offered, I quote, 'a little commoonyon' – presumably as a post prandial digestive aid.

At another church the minister over-catered at his communion service and was witnessed unashamedly pouring the 'wine' back in the bottle. A friend of mine became a Catholic after witnessing her vicar throwing out the leftover 'bread' to the birds.

Such liturgical nonsense would seem barking mad to a Catholic. We do not come for a meal. We do not come for a natter or catch-up. We do not even come to spend some time thinking about Jesus.

We are drawn to the mystery of the Mass because it is the guaranteed place of encounter with the Living Lord. Here He is truly and substantially present. If He was not here then I for one would stay at home and have a hearty supper and read my Bible instead. We are here because Jesus is here. As we celebrate this great gift we walk with Him on the Gospel road. When He stoops to wash Peter's feet, we share Peter's embarrassment. Then we share his obedience. 'You must not wash my feet!' Then if this washing is to make me part of Jesus then, 'Lord, wash all of me'.

We have followed the Lenten Gospels. With the blind man we have prayed to Jesus for clear vision and had to pass through the Pool of Siloam, the place of sending. For we are part of the fellowship of 'The Sent Ones' – the Apostles.

We have stood by the well of the ancient wisdom of the Old Testament. We have offered Jesus a little drink, a small corporal work of mercy in our almsgiving and have sought from Him the water of eternal life.

We have walked with the disciples to the mountain top of Transfiguration and caught a glimpse of Heaven and wanted it to go on forever.

We have faced the temptations in the wilderness of our lonely soul and sought, like Jesus, to turn again and again to the Word of God and reject the Tempter.

We have lain with Lazarus in our grave and longed for Jesus to come to our graves and raise us up – and to give us back our faithful dead.

In a few moments we will offer all we have at the offertory, knowing that, like the rich young man, we cannot give Him everything yet knowing that we can hold nothing back from our giving to Him who has given us His all.

In the Canon of the Mass we will line up in the front row of earth and the back row of Heaven with the Communion of the Saints. Peter, Paul, Andrew..... We will join in the songs of the angels. Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus... We will bring this sacrifice to end all sacrifices with the great figures of salvation sacrifice. Abel, Abraham, Melchisedek.....

We will bring our dearest and our departed. We will bring our Holy Father and the Universal Church to this altar, this place of supreme sacrifice and radical alteration. We will bring the world He made and loves still for reconciliation.

Here we gather at the intersection of time and eternity. Here we meet HIM. Here He condescends to dwell, to tabernacle with us.

Here the immaculate sacrifice is re-presented for our salvation.

Here He feeds us for the journey, the Viaticum of our mortality.

Here in the joy of praise and song we greet Him.

Here in the silence of the inmost chamber of our heart we adore Him.

What other mystery could so enrapture the soul of Man and speak so

lovingly and so confidently of his destiny?

This precious gift of the Mass, the broken Body of the Sacrifice and the sacred blood pouring from the chalices of Christendom infuse the faithful with eternal life and send us out into His world. To tell the lost about Jesus and bring them home.

Tonight this incomparable gift was given.

© 2017 Fowey Retreat