

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
June 19, 2022
“Mementos and Legacies”

Gen 14:18-20
1 Cor 11:23-26
Lk 9:11-17

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

When someone must depart permanently or even for a long time, often they will give a memento or keepsake to a good friend. Sometimes it is one of their own possessions. At other times, it might be something special they purchased for the recipient that they will use.

Much larger than a memento is a legacy. A legacy is something that is passed on that will benefit the heir for a long time. It might even benefit others for several generations.

Thus, a memento is something by which we remember someone special. It can be as small as a pocket knife, a brooch, or even a ring. A legacy is much greater. It is something that will permanently affect someone's life and, perhaps, the lives of others for years to come!

Jesus wanted to be remembered by his friends for who he was and for what he said and did. Consequently, on the night before he died, he gathered together his closest friends. But what he gave them was beyond what they could appreciate or understand at that moment. It was far more than a memento or ordinary legacy. It was something eternal and divine!

Jesus shared a meal with them. Jesus, as host, actually served them and even washed their feet. Then, at one point, he took bread and wine – He gave thanks to his Father in Heaven, and told his friends that these very simple and ordinary elements were himself! They were his totality – his body, blood, soul, and divinity that were contained in this special bread and wine. The bread and wine were not mere symbols. They were something far more. They were himself!

But there was much more. On the next day, Jesus would allow himself to be killed as the ultimate sign of love for his Father and for them. He would be a sacrificial gift to his Father to make up for – to atone for – all of humankind's offenses and sins!

Unfortunately, his friends had no clue, at the time, about the depth of meaning that Jesus wanted to convey to them. However, he asked them to repeat this meal, that they mutually shared, in the future. Repeating that meal would keep them from forgetting Jesus and everything they had learned from his life and teaching. Moreover, he told them to continue remembering him in this way until he returned at the end of time.

As I mentioned earlier, Jesus gave them far more than simple tokens of bread and wine by which to remember him. Jesus gave them a legacy – a legacy they were to pass on from one generation to the next – until his final coming!

In today's first scripture from the Book of Genesis, Melchizedek is a symbol of Jesus. Melchizedek appears out of nowhere and vanishes afterward. He is a sovereign – a king. He is the king of Salem – the king of Peace. He is also a priest of the One, True God – He offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving – a eucharist – for the victory of Abram – And the elements of that offering are bread and wine – And then he is gone – he disappears – never to be mentioned again!

To show his gratitude to God, Abram gives a tithe – He gives 10% of everything he possessed. Abram did this because he understood that everything he possessed came from God. Abram was merely entrusted with everything he owned – **as are we!**

In St. Luke's Gospel account, Jesus feeds 5000 men – not counting the women and children. Jesus had been healing their suffering bodies with his power. He had also comforted their wounded hearts and souls with his words. Now, he was concerned with their physical hunger.

So, he took the few loaves and fish, and gave thanks to God. Then he blessed this meal – enough for only 3 or 4 people – and fed everyone! There even were leftovers!

In all scriptural accounts, whenever Jesus ate a meal, he always gave thanks – He blessed what was before him and then shared whatever he had. Every recorded meal of Jesus points to, prepares for, or is a reminder for what he did at that Last Supper. Furthermore, the Last Supper points to and is one – with what Jesus did on the cross on Good Friday.

However, the meal we share – the legacy we share – the Mass, itself – makes present the living Risen Christ. Jesus wanted more than just to be remembered. He wanted to be part of our lives every moment of every day. Thus, it is the Risen Christ who is present at every Eucharist – at every Mass. Moreover, the Risen Christ continues to nourish our souls and spirits. He continues to do this until we meet him face to face, when we cross the threshold of death!

And so, Brothers and Sisters, let us truly appreciate who Jesus is – and all that he has done for us. May we see our coming to Sunday Mass as something far more than just an obligation – And may we always be part of the legacy that Jesus continues to be for us!

Amen.

June 19, 2022

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