

I had a particular realization just the other day. Our church will have celebrated Communion 4 times in little over a week after Easter Sunday. Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and twice on Easter if you wake up early enough for sunrise. For me, these will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> times (the 1<sup>st</sup> being my ordination service) that I as an ordained minister have the honor to serve and administer Communion. This is special for me because I find the Eucharist meal to be an important part of our lives as Christians. The Eucharist meal contains two integral parts: Remembrance and Feasting.

First, remembrance. Corporate memory is a concept that we seem to forget about in our highly individualistic culture. Communion is corporate memory practiced again and again. We remember Maundy Thursday again and again. The term Maundy comes from the Latin word *Mandatum* which means command or instructions. For Maundy Thursday was the day that Jesus gave his disciples the instructions for the Eucharistic meal. Take this bread, my body given for you. Take this cup, my blood poured out for you. Jesus is commanding his disciples to remember this particular moment and the moments of grief and suffering that will follow. As they celebrate the Passover together, this day of bittersweet celebration takes on new meaning for the disciples as it will be the last time they sup with Jesus until his resurrection.

And then comes the waiting. The time between Maundy Thursday and Easter, particularly Good Friday and Holy Saturday, must have been a time of great pain for the disciples. They were grieving and sorrowing. Peter denies Jesus three times before the cock crows. The crowds deny Jesus as their king and ask him to be crucified. Jesus is led out of town to Golgotha. Jesus is crucified on a Roman cross, a slow and painful death. And then when Jesus is dead, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus persuade the officials to let them bury and prepare Jesus' body. The women then come to the tomb to anoint Jesus. All of Jesus' friends and disciples, those who followed him, did not know what they were waiting for. But waiting is what they were doing. For us, the waiting is more pronounced than the grief the disciples felt. We know for sure that resurrection follows Jesus' death. Like seeds in soil waiting to grow and come to the light, Jesus remains dead for three days, having descended into the lower parts of the earth, only to come back in glorious light on the third day.

That brings us to feasting. In the Eucharist, we feast as a body of Christ, Christians of diverse backgrounds united in the act of bread and cup that Christ instructed his disciples to partake in. On Easter Day, not only is Communion a common act but so is feasting. We often have a dinner with family and close friends. The Gospel accounts do not include the celebration that follows the resurrection of Jesus. Mary Magdeline's words in John, "I have seen the Lord," though must have been followed by festivity. On Easter Sunday, the pastor shouts 'Christ is Risen!' followed by the response "Christ is risen indeed!" until the volume and enthusiasm is at a proper level of celebration. The first response or two are usually out of obligatoriness. The last response is out of sheer joy and exuberance. As we journey through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and wait upon Easter morn, may we find the remembrance and feasting in our common Communion. May the bread and cup spiritually nourish us as the body of Christ as we wait in grief and then as we celebrate resurrection on the third day. Peace be with you on the journey!

-Pastor Ryon