



THE YEAR OF ST. PAUL

ST. PAUL ON THE EUCHARIST

Third in a Series

May 17, 2009

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, 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 death of the Lord until he comes. Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. (1 Corinthians 11)

Don't Get Used to It!

In the years since St. Paul had preached the good news among them, the Christians of Corinth had fallen into some bad habits. The economic and political divisions among them were being felt even in their celebrations of the Eucharist. The Lord's Supper had become little more than a community meal, at which some feasted – while others went hungry. St. Paul reminds them of what the Eucharist is really about: the Lord's gift to us, not simply of bread and wine, but of his own body and blood. To eat the Lord's Supper is to have a share in that "new covenant" (1 Cor. 11:25) he won for us by the shedding of his blood.

Paul urges the Corinthians to a new awareness, both of the meaning of the Eucharist, and of themselves. Don't get used to the Eucharist!, Paul tells the Corinthians – and us. Don't let it become routine. Be reminded, every time you come to this table, of what the Lord did for us on that last night of his life. Receive "worthily" – aware of who you are, and of the great gift that you receive.

For Reflection

- St. Paul emphasizes that the Lord's Supper is a memorial sacrifice, with the twice repeated words "Do this in remembrance of me." He wants the Corinthians to be focused on Christ as they share the Lord's Supper. How do you experience the Lord's presence in the celebration of the Eucharist? Where? How?



- Every time we celebrate the Eucharist, we remember the self-giving love of Jesus. We are also called to make the Eucharist the pattern of our own lives, to give ourselves for others. Who do you give yourself for? Can you think of times when giving of yourself has been easy for you – and when it has been difficult?

Prayer for the Year of St. Paul

*Glorious Saint Paul,
Apostle to the Gentiles,
when the Lord called, you answered,
and you spread the good news of the Gospel
to the very ends of the earth.
Pray for us, that we may serve Christ as you did:
proclaiming the name of Jesus
in good times and bad,
when convenient and when inconvenient.
Pray for us, that we may welcome all the people
we meet with compassionate hearts and open
minds.
Pray for us, that Christ may live in us
as he lived in you.
We pray in the name of the One
who is your Lord and ours,
Christ Jesus the Lord. Amen.*

Novena in Honor of St. Paul

We will conclude this Year of St. Paul with a special novena of prayer, beginning Saturday, June 20 and concluding on the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Monday, June 29. Watch the bulletin for more details!