

April 05, 2009

Communion and Collection, Sunday 2nd Service

This is a time we call "Communion", where we take a small moment to eat a tiny piece of cracker and drink barely a gulp of grape juice and wedge a thought or two into our busy lives.

This is one of the shortest, smallest activities of our entire week and of our corporate assembly. Yet it represents the most profound and wondrous event, the deepest most significant truth in all of human history, and the very reason we assemble at all.

If you rotate your view of the cross, it makes an X. That X truly marks the spot - the center of all that is good in our lives, the center of all our hope, the center of all our value, the very reason we are here today, the reason we are sharing this moment. That cross, that X, is the pivot point in human existence that allows us anything divine.

So as we now do what can often seem routine, consider the profoundness of what it represents and remember with reverence and rejoicing the greatest most impactful thing ever done for you and me.

Prayer for the bread

Holy God of heaven, who loves us beyond measure, beyond understanding,
We come before you with reverence and awe and gratitude,
Thanking you for the cross,
Thanking you for Jesus, the Bread of Life, broken for us, broken by us;
The one who heals us and feeds us and sustains us.
As we again break this bread today, "break our hearts from what breaks yours",
Help us be grateful for this, the greatest gift of all,
Help us to eat well, to feast, to celebrate and share this gift and this moment,
Help us to have true communion with each other and with you.

Prayer for the wine

Great and awesome and wondrous God,
We come to you again, acknowledging as the source of life,
Again thanking you for the cross, for Jesus, whose blood we spilled,
And whose blood, through his sacrifice now covers the blood on our hands.
Thank you for this exchange, for this transfusion that brings us life.
Help us to drink deep, to celebrate and share this life,
And to have true communion with you and with each other.

Brian Shrock

April 05, 2009

Collection

Now we come to a time that provides us an opportunity to give. Yet it is much more than that. It is an opportunity for *freedom*. There is a pun that is both amusing and telling, that goes like this:

"If you don't pay your exorcist, you might get repossessed."

God is our Exorcist. He does not demand payment; he provides it. But what we have, has us. What we won't let go of, won't let go of us. God doesn't need our money or possessions or wealth. He's the one who provides it in the first place. But he knows that we need to let go of our possessions so they don't possess us - so they don't become the *lie that binds us*.

Prayer

Holy and gracious and generous God,
Help us now to practice freedom and generosity
and love for ourselves and each other and you,
By honoring you, the Provider, more than the things you provide -
the way Abraham did when he offered Isaac.
Help us to experience the gift of giving to you and each other,
To enjoy the freedom it brings and the guaranteed return,
Now and later, of treasure in heaven,
Through investment in you and each other.

Brian Shrock