

Our Narrative

When Jesus took the bread and wine of that last meal with his friends on the night before he died, it was at a moment when his life was coming to its climax. When he spoke those words over the bread and wine, what he said and what he did became so powerful in the minds of his disciples as a result of what subsequently happened, that they became the narrative for the lives of all of his followers, us included. It is therefore fair to say that perhaps the greatest reality about the Christian faith is the understanding of how the context of those words provides a narrative for our lives. As we grow and mature, we come to see the experiences of our lives as being framed by this narrative as it informs and sheds its light and meaning on the events that shape us.

All of us, no matter what our situation or standing are part of it, and we come to recognise how at certain moments, at certain times and in certain places, these elements conflate and draw us in. To hear the words spoken in times of joy and hope fill us with expectation. To hear the words spoken in times of sorrow and distress, challenge us to trust and believe. Look at where they happen in the gospels and you will discover that they are at the centre of every human emotion. At the feeding of the multitude we find a great crowd of people longing and searching for meaning and understanding. Where can we find food that will satisfy our needs? Where can we find nourishment that will fill our yearning? At the last supper we find a moment of crisis that is about to rip apart the disciples and shatter them. Where are we to discover sustenance at such desperate moments? Where is the courage that will strengthen us in our hour of need? On the road to Emmaus two are bereft, wondering what the point of it all was. How are our questions answered? Where is the sense in what we hope for? At the Lake of Tiberius after the Resurrection, the breakfast on the beach, the disciples are back in the ordinariness of their lives, fishing. Is the daily grind of my life all that there is?

Where is our answer if not in this narrative? *This is my body, this is my blood. Do it in memory of me.* Poignant and simple words they may be, but still immense and overwhelming, capable of capturing every aspect of who and what we are. What is the upshot? This great sacrament, this making present of the body and blood of Christ is the gift of love that flows through our narrative. It may take us years to realise that the ritual which we take part every Sunday in is not some isolated or disconnected anachronism of a memory long since forgotten, but a living, breathing exchange with the God who loves us and who in the person of Jesus walks with us through all the ups and downs of our lives.

This weekend eleven of our children will open a new chapter in their lives onto this narrative. No doubt as they grow and mature they will question and wonder about the meaning of it. No doubt they will experience many emotions and feelings that will cause them to pause and think about their lives. As they come to receive this food for the first time, let us pray that the body and blood of Christ will always be close to them, so to accompany them and inform the narrative of their lives, filling them with faith hope and love.