

Holy Communion

One of the things which I think is incumbent upon us as Christians is to make the gospel and the stories we read in it a living presence in our lives. It is so easy for us to just listen each week to the words which are read and then to allow them to pass over us without really thinking how they apply to us and our situation. The world around us never stands still. So many events and situations impact on us that we are scarcely able to consider one before another comes along to take the headlines.

Today in our parish and next week at The Assumption something very special is going to take place in the lives of some of our young children; they are going to receive our Lord in the sacrament of Holy Communion for the first time. How this affects and impacts upon them depends on us, and to help us understand this, we have the gospels which lay out before us the person of Jesus as a living reality not of two thousand years ago but as one alive in the here and now. Take today's gospel as a case in point. The first thing Jesus does is to make the people welcome and this is something vital for us to understand. Being made welcome is at once both an invitation and a greeting. We are being communicated with in word and gesture and this is at the heart of what we do when we come to Holy Communion. Jesus speaks about the kingdom of God and by effect he cures those in need of healing. We all come as victims in one way or another. We all are in need of his healing touch. Through baptism we are members of his body, citizens if you like of the kingdom and yet so often we fail to open up our lives to the possibilities that this affords.

We have no more than five loaves and two fish... and so we feel unable and lacking in the necessary gifts because we fail to realise that present in our midst is the most precious gift we need. We fail to see him living and moving amongst us, encouraging us to offer ourselves as members of his body to take on the responsibility of being what he has called us all to be. *Do this in memory of me* is not simply a passive command to receive, but it is also an active command to take part in making the kingdom the reality we pray daily for it to be. It is a command to live out in our lives the love that is expressed in those words. As such there remains an abundance of his love which is without limit, and this is the treasure which we have and with which we are able to achieve so much.

When we receive Holy Communion, the body and blood of Christ, we receive Jesus in the fullness of his humanity and in his divinity. To be sure none of us can explain the immensity of what this means and to attempt to do so will always be inadequate. But as we contemplate this day and this moment in the lives of our young children as they take into their flesh the incarnate Word for the first time, let us encourage them to live out the love of Jesus in their lives. Let us continue to welcome them and to talk with them about the kingdom, about the gifts which they can offer and about the treasure which they will receive. Let us help them to discover the living Christ who comes to them in Holy Communion as a life enhancing exchange of the human and divine.