

BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

June 2, 2024 • Body & Blood of Christ • Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

The Greatest Sacrament

Like all good Jews, Jesus and the apostles prepare for the Passover. The apostles secure a place for them to eat and celebrate the ancient ceremony of their faith. During the meal, at one of the ritual blessings, Jesus offers himself as a blessing—a blessing we continue to celebrate every day.

I have a great love for symmetry, and so I enjoy looking at trees and knowing that the branches that stretch to the sky have roots digging deep into the earth. In most healthy trees, the roots mirror the branches digging down, as far out and wide as the branches above them. People are very similar. If we hope to be healthy and whole, we need to be equally balanced, firmly rooted in the concrete reality of our lives while reaching out in the uncertainty of faith for all that is and can be.

We reach out, stretching for God, offering praise and seeking answers, but if we aren't firmly rooted in the ordinary things of our life, we're going to fall over. At the same time, we will be pretty shallow people if we live out our days stuck in the earth without constantly stretching toward our life source.

That's why the sacraments are such a perfect gift. The church celebrates seven different ways we can reach out for God's grace and receive God's life through ordinary physical things. Each sacrament has its own concrete sign, something that we can see, hear and feel that not only reminds us of the grace we receive in the sacrament, but also provides it.

The Blessed Sacrament is God's supreme gift. I become one with the Body of Christ in the very concrete signs of the faithful assembled, the Word broken open, the priest and, most especially, the blessed bread and wine; I share in Jesus' divinity just as he shared in my humanity. Jesus, you see, was the first and greatest sacrament—a concrete sign that God's life was with us and in us.

In a sense, everything visible is a kind of sacrament. Even the trees I so love are signs of God's love inviting us to love God in return.

FAMILY RESPONSE

Ask each person to look around the room and find something that reminds them of themselves. Share your responses.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

How do you best relate to Jesus? What is your relationship to Jesus in the Eucharist? What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?