

PAST/PRESENT/FUTURE

THE LESSON: LUKE 22

For 2000 years the sacrament of Holy Communion has been central to Christian life and worship. The different Christian traditions approach it with different language, different ceremonies and even somewhat different understandings, but what is important is what we have in common: When Christians gather together for Holy Communion, we are testifying to our faith in Jesus by doing something that he himself set in motion at the Last Supper.

Jesus and his disciples were eating the Passover meal together when he held up the bread and wine and referred to them as his body and blood saying, “Do this in remembrance of me”. Jesus knew, unlike his disciples, that he was about to be crucified. But he also knew why he was doing it: for them, and for us.

Today, when believers celebrate Holy Communion, we do so as a memorial of what Jesus has done for us. But Communion is not just about something that happened in the past. It is also about something that is happening right now, as the Church gathers together and experiences the spiritual presence of Christ among us. As Jesus said, “where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them”. Beyond this, Communion is also about something that we are looking forward to with great anticipation: Christ’s return, our own resurrection and the heavenly feast that we will celebrate with him on that day.

So what is Holy Communion? Holy Communion is something that will take more than a single lesson for us to explore because it is so rich in meaning, symbolism and mystery. But let’s start here: It’s about our relationship with Jesus: past, present, and future.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow the prayer plan that you created for yourself.

(If you didn’t make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families”, which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don’t have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>.)

Set aside a few moments when you pray, to reflect quietly upon this verse from scripture (Psalm 116:13):

“I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.”

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

O Blessed Saviour, who by thy cross and passion hast given life unto the world: Grant that we thy servants may be given grace to take up the cross and follow thee through life and death; whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit we worship and glorify, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (COLLECT FOR HOLY CROSS DAY, BCP PAGE 321)

PAST/PRESENT/FUTURE

LUKE 22: **STARTED BY JESUS**

⁷Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.” ⁹They said to him, “Where will you have us prepare it?” ¹⁰He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters ¹¹and tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹²And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there.” ¹³And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

¹⁴And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.