



St. Andrew's Tidings

Message from Ray:

Breaking of the Bread

In Pub Theology on Monday night the discussion came up about the history of “breaking bread.” In the week’s assigned Gospel reading from Luke 24, commonly referred to as Walk to Emmaus, two disciples were walking with the resurrected Jesus but did not recognize him. They invited him to dinner where he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. It is a pattern that Jesus repeats often throughout his ministry – taking bread, blessed the bread, broke the bread, and shared the bread.

Christians use the term “breaking of the bread” frequently interchangeably with communion or Eucharist, but it really is not the same thing. In fact the concept of breaking bread goes back in history probably to the first time someone figured out to bake bread, and then share it.

Even today in the traditional family meal in a Jewish household the head of the household will take the bread, bless it with these words “aruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, hamotzi lechem, min ha aretz.” (Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has brought forth bread from the earth.) The blessing is referred to as “breaking of the bread”. Then the bread will be broken by hand, never cut with a knife, and shared with the whole table.

Sharing meals is a very important part of Jewish family and community life. So important, that special blessings are said at the start and end of the meal. The term “breaking bread” is mentioned several times in the New Testament writings. It is important that we take a look at what it means in Jewish life, to “break bread”.

The “breaking of bread” is something that is done only in the context of a meal. In fact, the Talmud (Jewish Oral Law) uses the term only in reference to the blessing at the start of the meal. The one who says the blessing over the bread is referred to as the one who “breaks bread”. At every family meal, it was, and is the custom to have bread and wine. The blessings over the bread and wine are said at the

beginning of the meal. The one, who recited the blessing, did so while literally breaking the bread.

At the time of Christ, a 'communal meal' was a common practice, particularly among the Jewish Sect of the Essenes. The Essenes, a community living mostly in the Judean hills, were known for their absolute community of goods. Those who came into the Community, had to give all they had: there was one purse for all, and all members had expenses, clothing, and food in common. In the second chapter of the book of Acts, many of the believers in Messiah began to follow the Essene lifestyle, selling their belongings, having all things in common and breaking bread (sharing communal meals) from house to house: "And all believers were together and had all things in common; and those who had possessions sold them and divided to each man according to his need. And they went to the Temple every day with one accord; and at home they broke bread and received food with joy and a pure heart."

With the formal advent of Christianity in the fourth century CE, a "Communion" ritual was introduced as part of Christian worship. The ritual involved the reconstructing of the 'sacrifice of Christ', where the worshipers partook of bread and wine, which represented the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the phrase "breaking of bread" is a Jewish statement that was used throughout Israel before the time of Jesus. The breaking of bread is mentioned for instance in the records we have of the Essenes. These zealots held community meals where bread was prayed over by a spiritual leader. Afterward he would break it and each person would receive his or her share. This spiritual meal may or may not include drinking wine, but understanding here that drinking wine with meals was a common practice not that it added anything spiritual to the event. Breaking of bread was nothing more than eating a meal together.

We can see by this that breaking of bread was a practice that had nothing to do with the Lord's Supper. In fact, although Jesus broke the unleavened bread on Passover and did divide it among the Apostles, they ate it first as part of the regular Passover meal. Then after the Passover meal was ended he broke bread again and this is the bread of the Lord's Supper.

Today we celebrate the Lord's Supper as our Holy Eucharist, one of the great sacraments of the Gospel. This is explained in the catechism in the back of our Book of Common Prayer- "The sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace. Grace is God's favor towards us, unearned and undeserved; by grace God forgives our sins, enlightens our minds, stirs our hearts, and strengthens our wills."

"The two great sacraments given by Christ to his Church are Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament commanded by Christ for the continual remembrance of his life, death, and resurrection, until his coming again."

"The Holy Eucharist is also called the Lord's Supper, and Holy Communion; it is also known as the Divine Liturgy, the Mass, and the Great Offering. The outward and visible sign in the Eucharist is bread and wine, given and received according to Christ's command. The inward and spiritual grace in the Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of Christ given to his people, and received by faith."

So if you read this far I hope you understand that even though a key moment in the Holy Eucharist is the breaking of the bread it is so much more to us. When you come to the altar is really is in memory of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for us just as he explained to his disciples at the Last Supper. Holy Eucharist really does become the Last Supper, not just a blessing and breaking of the bread before we have a meal.

As the celebrant proclaims at each service as all are invited to join in the Holy Eucharist- "The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving."

peace+

Raymond

Sunday is Rector's Discretionary Sunday. The Discretionary Fund is dedicated to those in need. Over the Easter Season the fund has dwindled, so be generous!

Home Health Items

We now have a number of home health items that may be checked out when they are needed by parishioners. We have a folding walker, a cane, an over toilet potty seat, and a hand held shower head extension.

COOK BOOKS



We still have centennial cookbooks for sale! Where else can you get a useful \$10 gift? Why not buy several and keep them on hand for those last minute occasions when you need a gift? Plus, the cookbooks reflect the wonderful heritage of our church. Remember, each adult member (male and female) is asked to buy at least two cookbooks to help raise money for the Living Stones campaign. By purchasing cookbooks, each of us takes an active role toward reaching the goals of making our church more accessible and of enhancing a sense of community at St. Andrew's. Visit the table in Byrne Hall and purchase yours today.

St. Mary's Guild

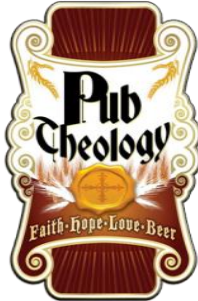
When: May 13th (last one till Sept.)

Where: Byrne Hall, 10:00 am

*Program: Valerie Lynch "Make a Scarf"
(choose your colors and design)*

*Hostesses: Camilla Jimmerson, Teri Floore
(Bring "finger food" or a salad for lunch)*

*Pub Theology
Tomorrow
Night
6 p.m.
"The Place"
on Harrison*



*Bring a
Bible-no
experience
necessary!*

Please keep the following in your prayers : Louis, Ann, Maggie, Anne, Jerry, Jeremy, Patricia, Joe, David, Michele, Evan, Lauren, Wyn, Laurie, Bob, Sean, Jeanne, Irv, Peggy, Mary Jane, Pat, Matthew, Shawn, Charlie, Colleen, Kris, Mary, Kitty , Holly, Tiffany, Charlie, Lindsey, John, Bubba, Sandra, David, Frances, Tom, Warren, Ruth Ann, Rosemary, Iva, Janet, Glen, Robert

We pray for our men and women in the Armed Forces at home and abroad; Jeff, Bove, James, Andrew, Kenneth, Evan, Ryan, Joe, Nate, Richard, David, Brian, Jason, Billy, Colin, Todd, Brett, Jordan