



The Best Supper © Jan L. Richardson

Prayer: In all situations we may find ourselves in, we are called to a journey where God's love and hope are the essential ingredients for bringing peace into a shattered and fragmented world.

As we celebrate World Communion Sunday, I'm aware of the many different ways we do it, and how important those ways are to us.

There's an artwork called The Best Supper by Jan L. Richardson. It was inspired by the image of Wisdom's Feast in Proverbs 9; this art piece evokes the countless meals that have fed me in body and soul. As I reflect on this image, I'm visited by memories of so many of the tables where I have found hospitality. Those memories resemble the pieces of this collage. Circling the table once again, I capture glimpses of those with whom I shared those sacred meals. I remember how we savored every scrap, how we lingered long after the last bite

was consumed.

I have found that traveling is the medicine my grieving soul most needs at this point Although I know some of the geographic locations I would love to be bound for, I know the highway will hold a few mysteries. This is part of its appeal.

One of the most compelling things about taking to the road is that it will bring me to the tables of friends and family. Mealtimes are among the times I miss most. Even as I am grateful for memories of countless meals I've shared in the communion of my daily life, the empty spaces at the table of my parents, our daughter and the numerous family heavenly saints is too stark and raw just now. So, when I receive invitations to be with friends and family—Come to visit, we'll feed you—I am eager to go.

In this long and sorrowing season, I am thankful for the solace of other tables, for those spaces of welcome where there is always room for me. With World Communion Sunday, I have those inviting tables especially on my mind and wanted to share with you this image. I thought of so many tables I have savored. Those memories are embedded in this image of Christ sharing the table with his friends: a table where, there is always a space to welcome one more.

World Communion Sunday reminds us that Christ calls us to a table where the welcome is wide. He offers us a space with bread and wine in abundance to give solace to our sorrow and to stir our joy. Even as Christ invites us to this table, he does not mean for us to linger here forever. He gives us sustenance in order to send us forth, carrying a space of welcome within us, called to offer it to those we meet: one more, and one more, and one more...

As we draw near to the Holy Table, may you find welcome and solace at the table, and may you receive the sustenance and joy of the Christ who sends us into a hungering world.

"Do this in remembrance of me." These words of Jesus are at the center of the remarkable prayer we offer each week as we celebrate the Eucharist. We think of this observance as a commandment and an invitation and a gift Jesus gave on the night before he died.

"I've really been looking forward to sharing this meal with you before I suffer. I won't eat again until after my work is done." Then Jesus picks up a loaf of bread. Gives thanks. Breaks it into pieces. Raises his voice in that way he does when he really wants you to remember something: "This is my body, which is given for you."

You realize he's serious when Jesus picks up the wine: "This cup that I am pouring out for you is the new covenant in

my blood.” Your mind races when Jesus says, “new covenant.” It races immediately to that place in the scriptures where God promises to write the law on our very hearts.

Perhaps the only sure thing we can say after 2,000 years of reflection is that the Eucharist can and should mean many different things to us. We can and should experience a wide range of spiritual benefits from participating.

We might feel closer to God. We might feel closer to each other. We might feel hope that for us, as for Christ, death is not the final word.

But in my opinion, the most important thing we should feel is empowered. My favorite line of any Eucharist prayer is this:

Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength, for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.

We do what we do in here so we can do what is needed out there. The fullness of this vision of communion is what we might call Eucharistic living. It turns our acts of seeking and serving into an integrated movement of worship and witness. You might even call it the Jesus Movement.

If you don’t believe me, recall once again what Jesus said on the night before he died for us: ***“My Father is glorified by this: that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.” Amen.***

TABLE BLESSING

To your table
you bid us come.

You have set the places,
you have poured the wine,
and there is always room,
you say,
for one more.

And so we come.
From the streets
and from the alleys
we come.

From the deserts
and from the hills
we come.

From the ravages of poverty
and from the palaces of privilege
we come.

Running, limping, carried, we come.

We are bloodied with our wars,
we are wearied with our wounds,
we carry our dead within us,
and we reckon with their ghosts.

We hold the seeds of healing,
we dream of a new creation,
we know the things
that make for peace,
and we struggle to give them wings.

And yet, to your table we come.
Hungering for your bread, we come;
thirsting for your wine, we come;
singing your song in every language,
speaking your name in every tongue,
in conflict and in communion,
in discord and in desire, we come,
O God of Wisdom, we come.

Prayer © Jan L. Richardson from *In Wisdom’s Path:
Discovering the Sacred in Every Season.*

Those who are blessing and receiving the sacrament at home, please prepare a slice or small loaf of bread, corn

tortilla, or rice cake or what is sacramental and joyful to share and a cup or small cups of juice — perhaps grape or cranberry —or coffee, or coconut water all of which are used in worship in different places.