

Second Hand Preacher

Corpus Christi Sunday

May 29, 2016

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

This week's reading is extremely meaningful to me. It not only is used at Corpus Christi, but also on Holy Thursday. As a priest, these two feasts are the basis of our belief in the Eucharist. Along with the incarnation and the resurrection, the giving of the Eucharist is at the heart of our redemption. As we celebrate these words, we are showing how important the self-giving gift of Jesus is. These words are the source and summit of our faith.

St. Paul writes to give the origin of what the early followers called the Agape meal. Agape is the highest form of love and the meal is a sign of unity and holiness. This was the ultimate sign of God's love. From what we know, there were struggles in how these meals were conducted. It did not always resemble what it was meant to portray. The rich were indulging and the poor were going without. By going back to the origins of this sacred event, this is a sign that we are created equal in the eyes of God. Having Paul state the words Jesus used shows their importance. These words were held sacred to the community.

These words serve as the basis for our modern words of consecration. When the priest uses these words, this is the high point of the Mass. These words facilitate the action that God does to turn ordinary bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus. As a priest, these words penetrate my very being. They allow me to believe that I am truly acting in the person of Christ. This is a breathtaking reality that I certainly didn't earn but was given to me as a pure gift. The Eucharist is a gift to all people. We need it to survive a world that is not always on our side. It helps us to be part of a community. We are one body in Christ.