



St. Stephen's Traditional Episcopal Church

11856 Mays Chapel Rd., Timonium, MD 21093

Maundy Thursday, April 21st, 2011

**✠ In The Name of The Father and of The Son
and of The Holy Ghost. Amen. ✠**

Tonight we are commemorating Jesus' institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the Holy Eucharist. When we contemplate the nature of this Sacrament, the word "commemorate" seems decidedly anemic.

It is, in fact, an event so vitally important to our well-being, we ought to celebrate with dancing in the streets. Come to think of it, no doubt this is probably what the church would have us doing were it not for the somber nature of Holy Week.

As it is, Jesus' generosity in instituting the Sacrament of Holy Communion is quite overshadowed by God's even more remarkable gift to mankind that we celebrate a mere three days later. The resurrection – with its promise of life everlasting – is a gift even more worthy of celebration.

However the fact of the matter is that the gift of Holy Communion is the thing that provides us with both the confidence to pursue the goal of life everlasting and the spiritual strength to attain it. As Article 25 of the Articles of Religion states, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is no mere badge or token of the Christian's profession.

It is a certain sure witness and effectual sign of grace, and of God's good will towards us. Through this great Sacrament, he works invisibly within us: giving

vitality to our spiritual lives, and strengthening and confirming our faith in him. In other words, practicing the Christian faith would be an awful lot harder without this wonderful gift.

The great mystery of the Sacrament lies not so much in the way it works as in the fact that the great Creator of the Universe – this infinitely vast, infinitely wise and infinitely powerful being – cares so much about such insignificant creatures as our selves.

It is absolutely bewildering that he would care so much about us that he has provided us with such a simple, unassuming means of obtaining the strength we need to live our daily lives. It is only in fairy stories we hear of people living happily ever after. Even as kids, we were knew enough to realize such notions are pure nonsense.

Those of us who have travelled life's by-ways know from bitter experience that, for all of us, life – along with its pleasures – also presents us with pitfalls, problems, pain, grief and deep disappointments. Indeed, this is a fact universally recognized by virtually all the world's religions.

Our one true God, however, is vastly different from the pantheon of gods that are st figments of mankind's imagination. And one of the differences lies in the price he asks us to pay for peace of mind, for comfort, for confidence in the future; for the certitude that our lives have meaning – that they aren't tales told by and idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. .

Unlike the gods of man's imagination, our Creator doesn't demand extravagant trials of strength, pain or endurance. He doesn't demand acts of courage or the lives of our first-born. The only sacrifice he asks of us is “a broken and a contrite heart.” In return, he gives us comfort, vitality and strength in a form that we can easily understand.

Meal times are one of our main sources of fellowship and comfort. Whenever we

human beings have something to share, celebrate, commemorate or commiserate, chances are we'll do so over a meal. In fact, our most cherished memories usually involve meals of some sort or another. And this is because food is very much more than merely a sensual delight, It is something much more fundamental than that – it is our sole source of the energy we need to sustain our physical lives here on earth.

The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is not simply a meal that provides us with the spiritual energy handle the slings and arrows earthly life throws at us. It is also a tangible guarantee of his gift of everlasting life – a gift purchased for us by means of the great sacrifice we will commemorate tomorrow. *AMEN.*

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