

Reflection for Saturday 12 September

The first reading at this morning's Mass from St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians chapter 10 vs 14-22 is one we seldom hear, but it does raise some important points about our faith.

Paul talks about the communion aspect of the Eucharist. The cup of blessing which we bless is a participation in the blood of Christ. The Greek word used for participation is "koinonia." This word means communion, fellowship with Christ. It's more than fellowship on a human level. It is the life-giving blood that Christ shed on the Cross binding us all together in him. In other words the communion of the Eucharist has a vertical dimension drawing us closer to the Lord so that we become one in him. But it also has a horizontal one, binding all those present together in one fellowship. But this communion or koinonia is more than that: it unites us with all Catholics throughout the world and with the communion of the saints who have departed from this life. It is the living Lord Jesus through the power of the Cross that makes all of this possible. So In Christ we have communion with the Catholic Church on earth. We also have communion with other Christians with whom we have only impaired communion. We have communion with the saints beyond the grave.

We also receive unity by our participation in the Eucharist. This is made clear to us in the second half of vs 16. Paul says, "the bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" Then in vs. 17 he says, "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one Bread." The single loaf Paul speaks of brings unity. The Blessed Sacrament springs from unity, and creates unity. Through the Body of Christ and his Precious Blood the many are united and remain one in him. This is the basis of Christian fellowship. Making our communion with the living Lord has serious implications in the way we live our lives.

It would seem in Corinth that some Christians were taking part in sacrifices to idols with their pagan friends. Paul says although these idols are nothing, yet the Christians in Corinth should not be having communion with them. He is implying that taking part in these sacrificial meals they are also taking on all the evil that comes from fellowship with demons. Paul says it is inconsistent with communion with the Lord. What is that saying to us?

Our fellowship in the Eucharist helps us to withstand daily pressures because it is our rock foundation.

Roger Watson