

Sunday 23 June 2019: The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ



Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming the death of the Lord

...The gospel reading from Luke makes clear the central place given to the Eucharist in the community for which the gospel was written. In Luke's narrative, Jesus, after completing his Galilean ministry, turns his attention to the formation of the apostles. He has them share in his mission by sending them to preach the good news and to heal the sick. Confronted by a crowd that has neglected to provide themselves with nourishment in their eagerness to stay in his company, Jesus has a new lesson for The Twelve. 'Give them something to eat yourselves', he tells them. There can be no doubt, as the narrative continues, that Luke sees these words as pointing to the Eucharist, the nourishing of the people of God that will be the centrepiece of the apostolic ministry. Taking the loaves and fish, Jesus 'raises his eyes to heaven', pronounces 'the blessing' over the loaves, and then 'breaks them'. Though provided by Jesus, the nourishment is given to the people through the ministry of the apostles – who are instructed to organise the people 'in parties', to distribute the loaves and fish, and to collect the scraps...

Extract by John Thornhill sm - read more at [The Emmaus Series](#) | Image courtesy of [pixabay.com](#)

17 June 2019: World Day to Combat Desertification

Human beings have always had to endure drought and deal with deserts. In the Old Testament Elijah meets a widow and child on the edge of death by starvation in a drought. In Jesus' life the desert was central. It was seen as the edge of the human world – a place where human beings only with difficulty could hold on to life and sanity. As an edgy place it was considered inhabited by demons. It was contrasted with the green and wellwatered valleys that reflected God's care for humanity.

Deserts and drought were then an unavoidable feature of life, sometimes seen to be sent by God as punishment, but certainly beyond human control. In our world we know that droughts and deserts can be made more acute by global warming, and that global warming is caused by human activity. When we remove trees from marginal land and cultivate it intensely, we are likely to turn it into desert and may also deplete the underground supply of water. The elements necessary for plant growth are also likely to be leached out. In recent years an increased

proportion of the earth has become desert. The rise in temperature around the earth is also likely to lead to more and more severe droughts. Their impact will fall disproportionately on people who are poor, because the poor are forced to settle in ever more marginal areas.

We have now become more attentive to the fragility of our environment and to the effects of mining, burning coal and fossil fuels and of land clearing on our world. We can see that the prosperity and fertility of our world depends on establishing good relationships between human beings, and also between human beings and the environment of which we are part. Poverty and the degradation of our world both spring out of a lack of respect for our fellow human beings and for our world. They reflect the pursuit of profit at the expense of respect.

The remedy for desert and drought making begins with respect: to stop seeking profit at the expense of the environment and people who are poor, and to ask more urgently how we can heal the human wounds of poverty and an abused environment. If deforestation makes deserts and contributes to global warming, the proper response is to plant out vulnerable areas. It is not to expel native people from their forest habitat so that we can build mines that will poison the surrounding environment, cause sedimentation of rivers and affect fishing in the rivers and the sea. The proper response is to protect both the environment and culture so that people can thrive.

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