

“Let’s feast and proclaim!” 1 Cor 11:23-26

“For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

How incredibly rich and surprising are the very first chapters of the Bible. The book of Genesis... They are like a bottomless well from which we can draw more and more of the amazing wisdom of our Creator God. If we are interested...

These chapters allow us to see with different eyes things which seem so common to us that we have stopped wondering about them. Let’s take eating... Yes, eating. What about eating? What is the role of eating in our lives?

Once the Creator had entrusted us with the first Great Commission, taking care of His creation, He said: “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.”

The whole creation, every plant yielding seed and every tree with seed in its fruit were given to us... for food. Or we could say – for our life. Our life is inseparably connected with our food. We eat and we live. The Lord opens His hand, He feeds us, and He satisfies the desire of every living thing.

Only one tree we were not allowed to eat from. That tree would not give us life, the opposite was true, it would bring death into the world. We would surely die. And, of course, our first parents did exactly that... They ate from that tree.

Life was lost. Death came into the world. Because of their rebellion they were denied the fruit of the tree of life. Since that day we have always been hungry. Our appetites can never be satisfied.

We crave for food, for drink, we crave for pleasures, for significance, we crave for joy, and excitement, for glory, for fullness, for abundance... but our appetites, our hunger and thirst are never satisfied... We always want more. There’s never enough.

Isn’t this amazing that our relationships with our God have always, since the very beginning, been about eating and drinking. About these very earthly things. It was so in the garden of Eden. Even the curse placed on humanity was about eating: “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread.” (Gen 3:19)

When the Lord came to Abraham, what did they do? Yes, they had a feast and ate together. When God Yahweh was about to lead Israel out of Egypt, what did He command them to do? What rite of remembrance did He introduce? Yes, eating of the Pasha meal. When God Yahweh made His covenant with Israel, how did Moses and the elders celebrate it? They saw God and ate and drank.

Think about the worship in the Old Testament, that's where the roots of our worship come from. How did they worship? They celebrated the grace and goodness of their God as He blessed their holy meals in His presence.

Sounds familiar? Already in the OT time the Lord Yahweh was foretelling through Isaiah what awaits humanity at the end of this age. Our Triune God "will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined." (Is 25:6)

Then in the fullness of times He came to fulfil all His promises. The Eternal One, the Creator became a creature. And what did He do? How did He spend His days among us? "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and...

[This is how His enemies characterized Him] ... "Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" (Mt 11:19) That's right. The Son of God spent His time among us eating and drinking.

Fellowshipping at the table. Reclining in banquets, invited by all sorts of people from all sorts of backgrounds. Eating and drinking with sinners. With real sinners. And remember, how did Jesus show His compassion to His followers?

Yes, by feeding them, by thousands and thousands. That worked quite well. People really liked it. Give us more! They even wanted to make Jesus a king. He had to flee to the mountains. Those people were just as self-focused as we are.

They stood in the very presence of the Holy One. He had fed them out of His compassion, but most importantly – Jesus had come to bring them eternal life. "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you." (John 6:27)

Just listen to these words: "I am the bread of life [...] This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. [...] If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever." (John 6:35, 50-51)

Remember how people responded? "When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "[O common, Jesus, what is this about,] this is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" (John 6:60) They were just like us. "Jesus give us what we want!"

"Jesus, bless us with good health! Jesus, bless us with enough daily bread! Jesus, protect us and rescue us from our problems! Jesus, help us to achieve our goals, fulfil our dreams! Jesus, give us what we want!"

“My beloved, come to me and I will give you eternal life, I will feed you with bread of life, and you will live with me forever!” “O Jesus, this is a hard saying, too hard for us to listen to.” Are we that different from people back then?

On the last night, Jesus Christ, the bread of life, gave to us, to all His disciples His greatest gift. He gave us something to eat and something to drink. As always, our relationships with God are about eating and drinking.

This time He gave us something very special. The food that we were deprived from since Eden. The food that gives us life, eternal life. Jesus Christ, true man and also true God has brought us something unique.

“For as the Father has life in himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself.” (John 5:26) Jesus Christ has life in Himself. He is the source of life. And now He wants you to receive this life from Him.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day... Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.” (John 6:53-56)

Bread and wine. So simple. So ordinary. So much needed for our physical sustenance. And now by means of these ordinary elements of creation, the Lord of entire creation gives us Himself, He gives us true life, everlasting life.

“If you eat the flesh and drink the blood, you have eternal life, and He will raise you on the last day”. “Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in Him.” This is the mystery of life that our Lord Jesus has given us.

His Holy Meal. Now our Lord has risen from the dead, He has shown to the entire world that death is no match to Him. He has ascended into heaven and sits at the Father’s right hand; He has received all authority in heaven and on earth.

And because He is true God, He is present everywhere. And because He is a true man, He can feed us with His body and blood in this most holy Sacrament. He can feed us on thousands and millions of altars at the same time, and as He does it, He fills us with His divine gifts. Abundantly.

He has prepared for us to eat and drink something that becomes rivers of living water in our hearts when received in faith. This meal is why the Lord invites us to come into His presence. He wants to feed us with life.

He wants to feed us with forgiveness, He wants to satisfy us with this spiritual food, which unites us with the Triune God. By eating and drinking the Sacrament, we are united with the Holy Trinity. We are embraced in this fellowship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. His presence fills us with His divine love.

His blood purifies us from all our sins and washes our consciences clean. His Spirit transforms us and restores us into the image of Jesus. The union with the Holy One sheds light into darkness and drives away any hostile spiritual power.

By eating and drinking the Lord's Supper our Christian faith is nourished and we are filled with divine wisdom which makes even the simple wise. This is a heavenly banquet, the one where every saint who has ever lived participates.

Have this picture – there are not many local celebrations of the Holy Communion. There is only one divine, heavenly banquet, where Jesus Christ, the Lamb that took away your sins, Himself hands you His body and His precious blood.

One eternal, time and space transcending divine banquet – and in our celebration here, we simply join this feast, together with all the angels and archangels and the multitude of saints.

Where the seraphim, the fiery ones, fly and sing with mighty voices: "Holy, holy, holy is Lord Sabaoth, the Lord of heavenly hosts!" And as we join this celestial celebration, we proclaim the death of our Lord until He comes.

See, brothers and sisters, what a mighty thing the Lord's Supper is. It is the proclamation that goes out till the ends of the earth. It is the proclamation, where we are privileged to participate.

As we respond to Jesus' invitation, as we prepare ourselves, as we put on our best clothes, as we come to Him humbly, as we celebrate this most holy meal, as we eat and drink with our God.

May the Lord be gracious to us, may He bless us with His Spirit of humility and wisdom, so that we understand what we receive, so that we obediently follow our Lord's instructions, so that we come here as beggars to receive God's forgiveness, and that we do in true unity of faith.

So that this most wonderful food, this divine eating and drinking would not bring us condemnation, but all the countless blessings that our kind Lord Jesus in His generosity wants to bestow upon us.

May this eating and drinking bring you in the most precious fellowship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, already here, and in the age to come.

Amen.