

'Come and have Breakfast' Why this table liturgy for Easter Day?

These are extraordinary times. On Easter day we would normally gather together in large groups to celebrate and participate in the glorious news that the Divine's life is stronger than all our hate and death-dealing. We would sing and shake hands, pray and eat together, and share in the crucified and Risen One's feast. None of this is possible this year. This table liturgy seeks to honour this reality. It is not trying to be a 'fake' eucharist or 'Eucharist lite'. Instead, it is a liturgy grounded in John's Gospel.

In John, there is no account of the last supper with bread and wine. While the disciples gather with Jesus for a meal, Jesus does not take bread and wine and say 'this is my body or blood'. Instead, Jesus takes a towel, and washes the disciples feet, taking on the role of tender servant and revealing what Divine power really looks like (John 13.1ff).

The reasons why the author of John chooses not to include these words will likely be debated until kingdom comes. However, I think we get a clue a little earlier in the gospel. While there is no last supper liturgy in John's gospel, in this gospel, in the midst of Jesus' ministry, after feeding 1000s of people out of scraps, Jesus says these shocking words: 'I am bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty' John 6.35. Much later, Jesus also says: 'I am the vine, you are the branches, those who abide in me and I in them, bear much fruit' John 15.5.

I wonder if, perhaps, for this author a significant concern was to underscore that Jesus' shocking words about being the bread and vine were not limited to understandings of Eucharist services or even of the cross.

Instead, as reflected in John, Jesus is the bread of life and the true vine not just on the night Jesus is betrayed and not just in the cross. For the author of John, Jesus is the bread of life and the true vine in the incarnation; in the Divine Word becoming flesh; in Jesus' ministry and teaching; in Jesus' feeding and nourishing; in Jesus' healing and liberating, in Jesus' cross and resurrection and in Jesus' ongoing presence.

This liturgy is offered for Easter Day. While it has the options of bread and juice it is grounded in John's gospel, and does not offer a recount of the last supper. This is not a Eucharist liturgy. Instead this liturgy draws from John 21 in which the risen Jesus appears to the disciples on the beach at a fire with fish and invites them to come and have breakfast. It is designed to be used over a meal - possibly breakfast - on Easter Day as a form of worship and celebration- just as earliest Christians worshipped over meals.

If there are two or more people in your home, decide who will read the non-bold words (you could alternate). Everyone is invited to read words in bold. You will need a candle, bread/hot cross buns, fish (if this is a celebratory food for you), juice, small candles if you would like to light these in intercession, and you may like to choose 2 Easter songs.

Please use and share the liturgy as you would like to, acknowledging that I have written it. With every blessing in these strange times.

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