

“They say you are what you eat”. What you eat not only shapes you (literally!) but it affects your body and your mind, your health and vitality and maybe even how long you will live. We are probably more conscious of what we eat today than ever before. It may not stop us eating junk food but at least we are more aware of the damage it can do. Bad food leads to clogged arteries, diabetes, foods that allow free radicals (whatever they are) to roam around inside your body causing mayhem... On the other hand good food gives health and vitality, it frees up what has become congested and sluggish, kills those free radicals, gets you in better shape and can lead to a longer and more productive life.

And it is good food, in fact the best of foods that Jesus offered his disciples on the night before he was crucified. It is this healthiest of all foods that God prepares for you to enjoy again tonight on this Maundy Thursday.

The food that Jesus offers you is himself.

Himself wrapped in, with, and under a wafer of bread and hidden in, with, and under a sip of red wine.

He said **“Take and eat, this is my body given for you.....Drink of it all of you, this is my blood shed for you...”**

How? We don't know how.

We don't care how, but we believe it is, it is his body and blood, the crucified and risen and glorified Jesus, because he says so. We take him at his word, his word that has his blood all over it to guarantee it. That's all that matters.

And if we are what we eat, then what does this food make of us? If we are taking in Jesus here then what does this food make of us? What do we become?

1. It makes us forgiven. Jesus said it is **“...for the forgiveness of sins”**. Imagine a food that can cleanse not just a few free radicals but every sin, and your conscience that accuses and condemns you. You won't find it at the health store but you can get it for free wherever holy communion is celebrated because there you receive the forgiving Christ, the sacrifice of Christ at Easter. The catechism says about communion that “where there is forgiveness of sins there is life and salvation”. This food is good not just for this life but guarantees the believer in Christ and his words salvation and eternal life. Now that is health food! After communion I always say to you the blessing: “the body of our Lord Jesus Christ and his precious blood strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life eternal”. No wonder we go in peace, our bodies and souls are eternally forgiven, saved and preserved by Christ.
2. It makes us members of the new covenant, the new relationship between God and people. **“This cup is the new covenant in my blood”** Jesus said as he instituted tonight's meal. Through Christ we enjoy a new relationship with God, not based on law and commandments and animal sacrifices but grace and forgiveness, based on the sacrifice of Jesus the Passover Lamb at Easter for us. We come to God through Jesus and his blood now, we have unhindered access to God, and we can enjoy him as our Father in heaven. We have no fear of judgment or punishment for what we have done with our lives in the past and we are part of the people of promise through Christ. Communion assures we belong and are people of the new covenant, the new relationship with God. We stand with Jesus before God as new people, spotless, holy even as he looks at us through Jesus.
3. It makes us witnesses to Christ. St Paul said after quoting Jesus' words instituting holy communion **“Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes”**. By taking part in this meal tonight rather than sitting at home

watching Port Power with a bag of chips and a coke you are giving witness to Jesus, to Easter, to his dying and rising for you and the world. You are saying you need what only Christ can give you for life, eternal life. And you are saying you are thankful. Thankful for everything Jesus has done for you by dying for you every time you commune. That's why we always return thanks after the meal here. Jesus said to **“do this in remembrance of me”**. Meals often do that - remember something or someone. A birthday meal remembers but it also celebrates the person who is very much present with us. Communion celebrates all Jesus has done for us at Easter but also celebrates his presence which is very much with us in the meal. So we are witnesses tonight to Jesus who died and who is with us.

We are what we eat tonight - forgiven and full of Christ's life, people who now enjoy a new relationship with God, and we are witnesses to Christ.

Now the trouble is that like most health food sometimes we prefer the taste of what's not so good for us over what is. So we sometimes stay away from communion for long periods and dine on other things. We imagine we can survive without it. We imagine this food looks so ordinary that it can't be that good for you. We become bored because God, like mum, puts out the same food again and again and we tire of it. It loses its appeal and flavour for us. But we neglect the food that is best for us to our peril. We neglect this food to our spiritual and eternal peril, to the detriment of body and soul. True, we might not always feel satisfied after receiving it, in fact we may not feel any different at all, but we need to believe that where Christ is there is always life and health and salvation because there he is with his healing forgiveness. What matters is what he says about this food not how we feel about eating and drinking it. And he says it is good, eternally good and life giving. He says it is his own life given and shed for you. That must be good for you and that's all that matters.

So the table is set. The ingredients are ready. All we need now is for Christ himself to say the word, his own words of institution that commit him to this food so that it becomes the container of his body and blood, and we will receive the benefits of his life and death and resurrection within us and so by the grace of God become more like what we eat, like Jesus himself. That's the promise of the Lords' supper.

Are you hungry?

Come and get it.

Amen.