



LET US BE EUCHARISTIC PEOPLE NOURISHED BY THE BREAD OF LIFE

***Bread of Life, hope for the world
Jesus Christ our brother.
Feed us now, give us life
Lead us to one another.***

Bernadette O'Farrell

The events leading up to Holy Week remind us of the difficult road that Jesus travelled as he went about the countryside leading, teaching and healing. In Jesus' time, to step outside the teachings of Judaism was punishable. Jewish people around the world have suffered because of hatred and discrimination. It is evident today as we see and read of hardship, unrest and turmoil. It has developed into catastrophic acts of revenge and waste of life.

At the Last Supper, the disciples had still not fully understood or realised the goodness, love and healing power of their leader. They were unaware of the betrayal, the impending suffering and death of Jesus, and probably the magnificence of the ritual of the bread and wine as they gathered in the Upper Room. They certainly were puzzled about the meaning of the washing of the feet.

Denise Levertov reminds us:

***When Jesus urges his disciples to repeat this action
He is not merely talking about washing of feet
He is insisting that we forgive one another
As He has forgiven us,
That we love one another
As He has loved us¹***

Jesus often used the symbol of bread in his teachings. We hear Him refer to himself 'as the Bread of Life', as 'The Living Bread come down from heaven' and the very sacred words of the Last Supper 'Take eat, this is my body'. One of Jesus' last requests was 'Do this in memory of me'. We are asked to be Eucharistic people who are nourished by the bread of life and in doing so, to be life for the community and the world. We are meant to feed each other sacramentally and communally; to be people of hope and care for each other and be restorative people.

On this holy night

We pledge once again to use our hands and feet

For the work of forgiveness

For the work of loving each other.

We pledge to wash each other's feet,

To hand over our lives for each other,

For the sake of the world.

We pledge ourselves to do Eucharist

To do this in memory of the one who gave his life for us

We do so because Jesus is our Passover Lamb.

Who takes away the sins of the world.

Denise Levertov²

***You are the bread of peace,
You are the wine of joy,
Broken now for your people
Poured in endless love.***

Bernadette O'Farrell³

Michele Shipperley rsj

1 Levertov, Denise (1997) – Feet.

2 Ibid.

3 O'Farrell, Bernadette (1982) – Published by OCP Productions.