

✠ JOHN 13:1-15, 34-36 ✠

In Nomine Iesu

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, broke it, and gave it to His disciples and said, “Take, eat.” In the same way also, He took the cup after supper, and having given thanks, He gave it to them saying, “Drink of it, all of you.”

The words of Jesus bring to life the sacrifice He made for us on the cross. His words, “this is my Body; this is my Blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,” give life and meaning to His suffering and death.

In His Holy Supper we do not merely partake of a memorial meal or participate in a unifying action, though these are a part of the Supper, but we eat and drink the very life of God, and so share in His life.

That is the love of God made manifest: that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. Thus our Lord, when He celebrated His Passover with His disciples gave to them the blood that protected them from death and the food that would sustain them in the wilderness.

In our weakness and smallness of faith we often ask the question of necessity and quantity. Do I have to partake of the Supper to be Christian? How often must I come to the Table of my Lord? What foolish and self-centered questions. If we fear that it will become our work, we should come all the more often so that our faith in Christ may be strengthened and we will find that it is His Supper, His work, not ours. If we fear it will lose its special quality or meaning, then we should stop attaching our meaning to it, and simply hear the words of Jesus as His words give it the meaning He intends it to have. It is His Supper and not ours.

Rejoice that our Lord went willingly and lovingly to the cross that brought death, so that you could participate in His life. It was no accident that our Lord defined His death and His resurrection in His Supper, which He gives to His Church that she should receive the benefit of His most holy work of redemption.

And so we come. We come to eat His flesh and drink His blood that He may impart to us life in His name. What son never eats at the table of his father? What child never partakes of the food of his parents? Do not come to the Supper only to fulfill a commandment, though by coming you obey Christ's command, “Do this.” Do not come to the Supper to show off your faith, for it is often small and weak. Come to the Lord's Table to receive that which He gives: His redemption for your body and soul, giving you life and salvation.

Oh, how our God loves us! That He would give His Son over to death and raise Him from the grave so that we should share in His glory. And now, my brothers and sisters who eat at our Father's Table, who partake of the Marriage Feast of the Lamb, love one another.

Through this salutary gift our God refreshes and strengthens our faith and so emboldens our love. For love is of God, and everyone who loves knows God, but whoever does not love does not know God for God is love (1 John 4:7-8).

The love of God is made manifest in the death of His Son, so His love is made manifest in you in this way: that you die for your neighbor and sacrifice yourself for your enemies. Do not judge, but reconcile one to another. Sacrifice yourself for your brothers and sisters, those for whom Christ died, by forgiving one another just as God has forgiven you in Christ. That you may stand before God righteous and pure, without blemish or wrinkle, holy in His sight.

Beloved, love one another. By this all men will know that you are disciples of Christ and children of God, if you love one another.

For greater love has no one than that he lay down his life for a friend.

In the name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT.

✠ AMEN ✠