

"DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME": DO WHAT ?

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INTRODUCTION

The older we get, the more we tend to ask ourselves what we have really done with our lives: what legacy will we leave, and will we even be remembered at all? Part of our yearning for immortality, and even for being remembered for at least a short while after we die, seems to be our desire to leave something of ourselves behind. To think we might be remembered only as a cheerless pessimist might cause us to sink deeper into depression long before we die; to hope to be remembered as a person of fierce faithfulness and deep loyalty might inspire us to live through our darkest days. Most of us would like to be remembered for something worthwhile. This is one reason for birthdays and celebrations, so that good memories might be created, evoked or re-lived among living loved ones and communities, and even, perhaps, for the next generation.

CONTEXT AND FOCUS

As soon as we consider how, to what, and to whom the words of our title are applied, we discover a splendid opportunity for some lateral, imaginative and Spirit-led reflection. Obviously Jesus is the primary subject, the one who blessed, broke and shared bread at

the Last Supper and at the great feedings of the crowds recorded earlier in the New Testament. But Jesus is also the Blessed One of God whose own body was broken and whose entire life was itself a great sharing. Furthermore, we are called and blessed by Jesus, as indeed were the people he encountered; and we are in turn challenged to emulate him by our lives, even to the ultimate cost of having them broken and shared with God's people. As Jesus himself said, "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13), and "as I have done, so you must do" (John 13:15). Here is food for thought, and words and images to digest in the course of today.

In this reflection I would like both to step back and step forward: to step back to the Last Supper itself and consider it in its context; and to step forward to our day, as we attempt to follow Jesus' instructions to contemporary disciples, to "Do This in Memory of Me." What exactly did it mean for Jesus and what does it mean for us? The injunction is repeated every single time the Eucharist is celebrated, yet the phrase is not found in Matthew (26:26-9), Mark (14:22-5), or anywhere in John's Gospel, and Luke has it, but only in reference to the bread (22:19). It is found, referring to the action over both bread and wine, only in Paul. Writing to the community at Corinth (1 Cor 11:24-5), he claims to have received the message "from the Lord," though he never met Jesus in the flesh! According to Paul's account, Jesus first took bread, blessed, broke and shared it, and said to the assembly: "Do this in memory of me." Then having taken, blessed and shared the wine, he repeated the injunction: "Do this in memory of me." But, since Jesus' words and actions are not uniformly recorded, it might be

helpful if we look more closely at the context of the Last Supper itself.

For two thousand years the Church has identified these as the most important words of the Eucharist – the words of consecration of bread and wine. Though I will not attempt to discuss the theology of Real Presence, Transubstantiation or Transfinalization, or to define exactly how this central Eucharistic act is to be understood, nothing I have to say detracts in any way from the Church's understanding of the Eucharist. What I want to do is simply to look at the Last Supper and at the action and words of Jesus as he sat at table, in the broader context, both of his own life and of the lives of those who, though the ages, would attempt to remain faithful to him by gathering as a community to celebrate the Eucharist, and by scattering at its conclusion in an attempt to take the liturgical action and its implications, into the world beyond and down through the ages.

REMEMBERING, FORGETTING, DIS-MEMBERING

Jesus wanted to be remembered, and the action of the Last Supper would be his way of trying to ensure that he was. The most obvious opposite of *remember* is *forget*. Less obvious, perhaps, but highly significant for our purposes, is *dismember*. Jesus wanted the disciples not to forget him, but equally, not to dismember either him or themselves by their subsequent actions. This is worth exploring further.

Some things we remember so long as they continue to have significance for us; others, because people will simply not allow us

to forget them – sometimes to our embarrassment! The night before he died, Jesus was at pains to do both of these things: to ensure that certain formative events were permanently fixed in the memory. After some three years, his inner circle – the Twelve – were continuing to demonstrate that they had simply not learned, or had already forgotten, so many things Jesus had taught them, so many things that he badly needed them to remember before he left them. The gathering for the Last Supper was itself a night to remember the first Passover, and Jesus wanted to make it a night they would never forget. On this, his final night, over this last extended evening meal, Jesus still has so many things to say. As he speaks, he reminds them perhaps, of the feeding of the 5000 (“Do you remember your less-than-pastoral response: ‘send the people away!?’”), or of the time Jesus was welcoming little children (“Do you remember how you said, again, petulantly ‘Send them away!?’”) Or, speaking to Peter, James, and John, he would jog their memory (“Do you remember when I took you up the mountain, and the voice you heard at my baptism said again, “‘This is my beloved son’ – but added the solemn: ‘Listen to him!?’”). And they would surely have remembered then – and would not be allowed to forget – so many of their gaffes and lapses of judgment. So Jesus is calling on them to remember him and the lessons he had been at pains to teach them.

But there is one more critical lesson that Jesus needs to teach them at this late hour: that if they fail to remember him they will surely forget him, and in so doing they will actually forget themselves, forget who they were called to become. And if that should happen, far from being a community, a united band of

missionary disciples, they will become disunited, fractious, fractured, *dismembered*. By using the Last Supper to impress on these disciples some critically important lessons, Jesus is calling them to recall and remember lest they forget, and to remain united as members of his community, his body, lest they become disarticulated, dispersed, *dismembered*.

When we use the word *remember* in the context of Eucharist, we are translating the Greek word *anamnesis*. That did not mean a kind of nostalgic recollection; it was an earnest and dramatic bringing to vivid reality, a crucially important part of their past and present identity. The Last Supper is a unique event (and our Eucharist is not an attempt to repeat what was unique): a dramatised, concentrated recapitulation or distillation (an *anamnesis* or vivid remembrance) of *the entire life and teaching of Jesus*. "Do this," he is saying, "Do [all of] this". And as he does so, his arms must be open wide enough to encompass *everything* he has done for them, and not narrowly pointed only at bread and wine. Yet the focus on the bread and wine is also intended to release a whole host of unforgettable memories of who Jesus is and what he stands for; when the "this" (the specific action over the bread and wine) is done, it will act as a trigger for myriad memories and future actions.

THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS

"The sacrifice of the Mass" is a well-worn phrase, but the word sacrifice in this context remains misunderstood by many. "The *unbloody* sacrifice" is scarcely better if people are trying to relate the

bloodletting of Good Friday to the Eucharist we celebrate today. Jesus both superseded and repudiated the old Semitic sacrifices, including blood sacrifice, yet the association of sacrifice, immolation and destruction, blood and death is hard to break. So let's look at the etymology. "Sacrifice" is a combination of *sacr-* meaning holy (as in *sacristy, sacred, sacrosanct or consecrate*, and *-fice*, coming from *facere*, to make or to do (as in *edifice, facility, or fact*). Together, they produce the most common translation of *sacrifice* as "to make (something) holy"; to *consecrate* also means "to make (something) holy." This makes sense in a world divided into the profane and the sacred, and it implies that something (or someone) has been moved from the profane world to the sacred realm. But in the beginning, there was no such division: *everything* God created was holy! However, in our cultural and religious experience, we commonly think of things or people being set aside, shifted from one category to another: in other words, consecrated. Is this a description of Jesus? Is his sacrifice to be understood as his "making (something or someone) holy"? Is the Mass simply taking bread and wine and setting them aside, shifting them from the category *profane* to the category *sacred*? And is the priest/presider likewise a sacred figure by virtue of having been consecrated or set aside? We must admit that a good deal of our Catholic thinking has developed along these lines and clung to their implications. But it is seriously misguided.

What if we were to think of the alternative rendering of sacrifice: not as "making (something/someone) holy", but "*doing* (something) holy" or "*doing* holy (things)"? Then it becomes crystal clear that this describes the entire life of Jesus: he consistently did

holy things; his whole life was spent in doing what was holy. And if he said “do *this* in memory of me”, what is he asking of us? Not to consecrate or make something holy that was previously profane or unholy, but simply to concentrate on doing what is holy and avoiding what is not. As St Paul says, our whole life should be a following of Jesus “who gave himself as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:2). Unfortunately, Paul was quoting the Book of Exodus and a context of animal sacrifice, which was antithetical to the life of Jesus! But from the very outset of his public life, Jesus showed us what his sacrifice would look like: a whole life entirely devoted to doing holy things.

In Chapter 4 of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is “led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.” The devil is the father of lies, deceit and all that is un-holy. The opposite of *sacrifice* (“to do holy things”) is *sacrilege* (“to do un-holy things,” or “to strip away what is holy”), and three times the devil asks Jesus to do something that is sacrilegious and palpably unholy. To turn stones into bread is to turn divine power into a parlour trick; to throw himself down from the temple is to abdicate personal responsibility and expect God to intervene miraculously; and to bow down before the devil is simply idolatry. Jesus will do none of these unholy things; he has come only to do holy things. And the devil, vanquished, is replaced by the angels, while Jesus leaves the desert, totally focused on his mission of a life of sacrifice, or doing holy things. And at the last supper, he recapitulates his life, and challenges his disciples to imitate it: “do this – all of it, as I have done – in memory of me”!

The Eucharist is not a repetition, either of Jesus' life or of his death: it is the *sacrament* of the unrepeatable sacrifice of Jesus: his entire life's work of sacrifice. A sacrament is a signpost that points, not to itself but to something or someone beyond. The Eucharist is a sign that points us to the life and example of Jesus. If we do *this*, we will remember who we are, and why we try to do what we are called to do, in the name and memory of Jesus.

EUCCHARIST AND eucharist

We can now make a valid and helpful distinction between Eucharist (capital E) and eucharist (small e). The former (capital E) is the Mass, the Liturgy, the Sacrament, the ritual we follow in church; for most people it is relatively infrequent and formal, and we refer to it as the "source and summit" of the Christian life. It is, in other words, both the foundation of our Christian lives and their high point in terms of its purpose of common worship. The latter (small e) is the way we carry that out into the world and our daily lives; it is even more frequent than the number of our days, and often informal or of relatively little consequence. It is the expression of our recollection or "remembering" of who Jesus was and is for us. And it is in many ways the true measure of our faithfulness to Jesus' instruction: do this – all of it, everywhere, every day – in memory of me.

Both these aspects must be combined if we are to live truly Eucharistic lives. Eucharist cannot be only a Sunday ritual, separated from or unconnected to our daily living. But the Sunday gathering is critically important, not to be minimized, and an intrinsic component of the "this" that Jesus commands us to do in

memory of him; it is intended not only to feed and nurture us, but to make us even hungrier, to put an edge to our appetite for God's justice. Perhaps that is why, though we are familiar with the language of *meal* and *banquet*, the bread and wine we receive are more like an appetizer than a full meal that would make us replete and drowsy; we need to leave the Church alert and alive, not ready for a siesta! The Eucharist must be part of the very fabric of our lives, not simply a "Sunday Supplement." And we might say that the Eucharist (capital E) of the great feasts and liturgical high points is lived out in "ordinary time" as eucharist (small e).

"DO THIS": WHO IS THIS COMMAND ADDRESSED TO?

When we gather at the Eucharist and hear the words, "Do this in memory of me," we might conclude that Jesus is specifically addressing the one who speaks: the presbyter or priest. Indeed many of us have restricted the words both to the liturgical action of consecration, and to the presider who has received the sacrament of ordination. But scholars are in very wide agreement that there were significantly more at the Last Supper than the named Twelve, and if – as is very likely – this was a Passover Supper, there must have been women and at least a young person who asked the question: "Why are we here this night?" When Jesus is recapitulating his life and teaching then, he is doing it for the benefit of everyone – both those physically present and indeed all his disciples, alive and not yet born. This is by no means a stretch of the imagination, and it draws each and every one of us into the drama, just as it brings the drama of the night before he died, into our own daily lives as disciples. So we need to reflect on discipleship itself, and on

who is invited and included, for there are two dangers to avoid.

The first is that we imagine that we are not included, either because we were not present or because we are not included in the narrow meaning of "apostles". The second is that we imagine we *are* included, simply because we have been baptized and therefore numbered among the disciples in general. Unlike the disciples of the prophet Mohammed (who included only those who actually knew him and then outlived him, but not subsequent generations) the disciples of Jesus include literally anyone and everyone who takes him seriously, whether during his life or since then and down to our own day. And they are not to be identified simply with those who have been baptized. Baptism may be a necessary condition but is not a sufficient criterion for discipleship: it must be activated – Confirmed – by a conscious and continuous following of Jesus.

Jesus was different from the rabbis of his time in a number of important ways. He was not, in fact, a rabbi but a layman, which many of us tend to forget. True, he is called rabbi by some, and referred to as such in the New Testament, but that was a term of honour or respect, rather than a technical designation. But unlike the rabbis who would only have men as their disciples (and rather specially qualified men at that), Jesus cast his net much wider and his invitation was to any and to all: women and men, poor and rich, social outcasts and the socially significant. Moreover, unlike the rabbis who were sought out by would-be disciples and who would never take on more than a handful of the elite, Jesus picked and called his disciples without discrimination. As he said pointedly: "You did not choose me; I chose you and sent you out to bear

much fruit" (John 15:16). Truly Jesus was unique in his radical inclusion and radical equality.

Discipleship then, is, in principle for everyone, but not, interestingly, for the angels: it is only for human beings. As the Letter to the Hebrews says, "For it was not the angels that he took to himself; he took to himself descent from Abraham. It was essential that he should in this way become completely like his brothers [and sisters], so that he could be compassionate and trustworthy" (Hebrews 2:16-17). But if discipleship is for human beings, it is important to define what that means, and why it should be so. The basic definition of a human being (walking on two feet, standing upright, having an opposable thumb, speaking, laughing, crying, and so on) is common to all cultures, but the ancient Israelites condensed this to an utterly simple phrase or formula: "having ears." To be human then, and therefore a potential disciple, is to have ears – but to use them by listening, internalizing and acting on what one has heard. The people were constantly reminded of this by the *Shema* prayer (Deut 6:4), which starts, "Listen [hear] O Israel!" It continues by calling the people to hear, to remember, to act accordingly and to teach their children. (We might say parenthetically that the *Shema* is like the "Do *this*" of the God of Israel: God tells people what they should do and bids them not only to do *all* of it but to ensure that subsequent generations do the same).

But when Jesus came, he remarked sadly that the people had ears but did not listen, and time and again he chided them for failing to be fully human (Matthew 13:13-15). When someone commended his mother – identifying her as "the womb that bore

you and the breasts that nurtured you” (a rudimentary definition of a mother), he responded” “More blessed are those who *hear* the word of Gods and put it into practice” (Luke 11:28)! And time and again (Mark 4:23 etc) he reiterates: “If anyone has ears to hear, let him/her listen to this”.

If we wonder why Jesus came to call human beings rather than the angels, we find the answer (much more fully developed in the Eastern Church than in the West) summarized in the word *theosis*. *Theosis* can be translated as “divinization”, but we must be careful to understand this as it is intended. We are not, of course, called to become God, but to become *like* God, *Godly*: this is the meaning of divinization. It is a reaching of our full potential as human beings. God became human in Jesus so that we could be raised up by Jesus and reach our full potential rather than fail to do so. St Athanasius even said that even if there had been no Fall, Jesus would still have come, precisely in order to show us what we were destined for and what, with God’s grace, we could still achieve.

This promise of *theosis* was an implicit expectation of the Jewish people at the time of Jesus. They knew the promise of Isaiah 61 (“The Spirit of God is upon me and has sent me ...”), which is the promise of liberation, best summarized as *restoration*, or the returning to good health and full humanity: in other words, *theosis* is for all those made in God’s image. And Jesus will read and invoke the very same passage (cf Luke 4:18-20) when he presides in the synagogue at the outset of his public life. He affirms that, like Isaiah, he too has been sent to complete the work

identified by the prophet. But in his case the promise of *theosis* – of restoration to full human potential – is much more explicit.

In summary, discipleship is potentially for everyone, and is intended to make people followers of Jesus, and as it does so, to help them realize their destiny and reach their full potential. And this takes us back to Jesus' command, "Do this in memory of me", for if they are indeed to reach their full potential, disciples must do as Jesus asks them to do and not simply do their own thing, however virtuous, and expect God to be pleased! The Last Supper is Jesus' last opportunity to remind the first disciples – and indeed all subsequent disciples – of their responsibility to keep his memory alive by the way they live their own lives in fidelity to his.

"DO THIS": HOW ARE DISCIPLES TO FULFILL THIS COMMAND?

If Jesus is telling his followers to keep his memory alive and to keep themselves in communion with him by remaining faithful, then their job is to imitate him as much as they possibly can. Jesus himself has incarnated – brought down to earth – the eternal mission of the Trinity (the *Missio Dei*). He is the "good news", but the good news *incarnate*, made flesh. He is not simply a noun ("evangelization"); his entire life is an active verb ("evangelizing"). He is the "good newser" who does not simply deliver the good news in the manner of placing a newspaper in front of the people or passing on a story at second hand. He *is* the embodiment of good news; he does not simply *talk* about forgiveness or healing or feeding: he forgives, heals, and feeds the people.

If we were to identify the main features of the evangelizing mission of Jesus, they would – according to a very wide consensus of today’s missiologists – be listed as *proclamation, witness, dialogue* and *liberation*. These become, in the life of Jesus, the components of the “this” that he bids his disciples do in his memory. And indeed we, individually and collectively as community, need to pay serious attention to these as we shape our lives as disciples and as church. Because we are called both individually (but not as individualists) and collectively (to form community), we can assess the degree to which we are doing “this” by identifying our individual and collective faithfulness to proclamation, witness, dialogue and liberation.

This will help us identify our life’s work, they are worth serious reflection and discussion, but we cannot elaborate on them here. But there are four other features or characteristics of Jesus’ life which are perhaps more accessible to us because more readily incorporated into our daily lives. They are rather less formal, more ordinary, but no less characteristic of Jesus’ life. They are *encounter, table-fellowship, foot-washing* and *boundary-crossing*.

ENCOUNTER

A favourite axiom of psychotherapist Viktor Frankl (1905-1997) was “to love, you must encounter.” This sums up the incarnate, hands-on ministry of Jesus perfectly. It is impossible to love people in general, simply because there are no people in general. And we cannot love a category such as “the poor” or “the homeless”, because that is an abstraction; there are no people in the abstract, and no generic people: only concrete, specific human

beings. Jesus does not love “the poor”; he loves actual, real people. It is in fact, what we might call his pastoral plan: to encounter people one by one, face to face, and inclusively or without discrimination. And then he says to his would-be followers: “Do this in memory of me.” Our response will be the measure of our faithful discipleship.

So who do we encounter? How do we encounter people? Whom do we avoid or treat brusquely? Dorothy Day reminded us: “You only love God as much as you love the person you love the least.” So whom do we go out of our way to avoid? Whom do we love the least?

TABLE-FELLOWSHIP

It has been said, and quite seriously – that this was the main reason for Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion: he ate with all the wrong people in all the wrong places at all the wrong times. Table-fellowship was one of the ways in which Jesus evangelised: he was good news to many people who otherwise lived with very little good news because of the way they were treated by many people, and religious leaders in particular. But the table fellowship of Jesus was radically inclusive, and while at table he pointedly identified the bad theology being purveyed as God’s will. This corrective was indeed good news to very many people: they discovered welcome, inclusion – and a fearless spokesperson.

It takes very little reflection to realize we tend to eat with two kinds of people. Human beings eat with their friends of course; but they also eat on occasion, with their enemies – if ever they hope to reconcile with them. As a human and social act, eating can both

sustain friendship and turn enemies into friends. Stalin and Churchill, Krushchev and Macmillan, Nixon and Mao, Reagan and Gorbachev – all ate in each other’s company at State Banquets whose diplomatic function was to attempt to thaw frozen relationships.

So why is it that, although Jesus does the same, when we gather to “do this” in his memory, we are divided by a common table from a range of people who are politely told they are *not* welcome? Why is it that Jesus’ table of inclusion and unity has become our Eucharistic table of exclusion and disunity? Do we presume only to eat with our “friends”, and leave “enemies” outside the dining room in the vain hope that they will thereby become our friends? Or do we simply stand in judgment?

FOOT- WASHING

Nowhere in John’s gospel is the injunction “Do this in memory of me” recorded in those actual words. Instead, the central act of the Last Supper narrative is the washing of the feet. Having risen from the table (placing himself in a superior or ‘one-up’ position), Jesus goes down on his knees before his disciples (adopting an inferior or ‘one-down’ position). This is the posture of a slave or servant. He then warns Peter and the others that unless they allow him to wash their feet they can have no part of him. But that is not the end, for he orders them dramatically to repeat this action by washing each other’s feet: “As I have done, so you must do,” he said (John 13:14). This is very close to a paraphrase of “do this in memory of me”, and not by chance: Jesus is clearly intending to give them an example they cannot forget. And yet the foot-washing

is more than a single symbolic action performed the night before Jesus died. It is again a kind of summation of all his work of servant leadership. His whole life has been spent in “doing holy things” (sacrifice), and the actual footwashing stands as a permanent reminder of how Jesus chooses to serve by subordinating himself, by going ‘one-down’. It evokes Paul’s image in Philippians: “Though he was in the form of God, he humbled himself and became as we are, but humbler yet ...”) (Philippians 2: 6f).

So where is the foot-washing in my life? Whose feet do I wash through outreach and service? Whom do I expect to wash my feet, though I would never think to reciprocate? How often do I attempt to balance my superordinate or ‘one-up’ service or ministry, by assuming a position of subordination or being ‘one-down’? To what extent is the foot-washing that marks my life, done in memory of Jesus, consciously or not? And what do I need to reflect and act on if I am to have the mind of Jesus as Paul says to the Philippians (Philippians 2:5)?

BOUNDARY-CROSSING

Here is a final characteristic that marks the entire life of Jesus, who said that the birds of the air had their nests and the foxes their dens, but that he himself had nowhere to lay his head (Matthew 8:20). He was always on the move, always “looking for trouble” – troubled people with troubled lives and troubled bodies – in an attempt to bring them good news of God’s love.

The boundaries Jesus crossed did not take him very far from home, though the circumstances of his birth (outside the city) and his crucifixion (outside the city) form appropriate bookends to his earthly life. More important than national or international boundaries, or even geographical boundaries such as seas of mountains, were the boundaries that marked inclusion, privilege or safety. Jesus deliberately and continually crossed such boundaries in order to include those who were excluded either by gender, lifestyle, economic status or religion. His practice of radical inclusion and his example of radical equality were intended to show God's love for everyone without exception, which was indeed "Good News" to perhaps 97% of the population, but definitely not to the tiny insulated, privileged, and protective minority.

Where are the boundaries in my life? How well do I protect my own "comfort zone"? There is nothing very wrong with a private space, a bolt-hole or place to call one's own to withdraw to for solitude, recuperation and relaxation. But if we withdraw at whim, and remain isolated or cut off from contact with God's people, we run the great risk of running away from our pastoral responsibilities. An antidote to this would be to move beyond the "comfort zone" as a conscious commitment to the apostolate – as Jesus did. He withdrew in order to pray, so as to be available for the needs of others. His private moments were spent in contemplation and meditation, in being filled again with the Spirit of God that he would pour out for all in need. Replenished he could be depleted; depleted he needed to be replenished, in order to re-commit to the boundary-crossing that marked his life.

WHERE ARE DISCIPLES TO DO "THIS"?

With Jesus as our model, we know that there are effectively no limits to our outreach, only the legitimate limitations of our own persons and circumstances. Some of us – by circumstance, energy, age or desire – are freer than others, to move, to engage, to explore; others are somewhat more limited. But all of us have the capacity to “go beyond” – to challenge and push ourselves to go the extra mile, to reach out just a little farther, to extend our hands and open our homes in hospitality. And how can we attempt to do this? By encounter, table-fellowship, foot-washing and boundary-crossing.

We can seek out the boundaries that separate: economic, religious, political and kinship boundaries; boundaries of privilege, of education or of gender. Like Jesus, we can identify – transcending them or gathering there – the boundaries that separate the righteous from the unrighteous, the healthy from the sick, the “pure” from the “impure”. Our prisons and remand homes, our hospitals and nursing homes are situated just across invisible boundaries that many would never think to cross unless in extreme and personally relevant circumstances. Perhaps it is time for our Eucharist to stimulate our eucharist, as we attempt to “do this” in Jesus’ memory.

One more issue ought to disturb us and shake our complacency. We may – erroneously – assume that we already try to love our neighbour as ourselves, for we might have too narrow an understanding of what this really means. The early Christians

became highly visible and highly attractive to others, precisely because of their understanding that “neighbour” includes two kinds of people, people separated by an invisible boundary or barrier that needed to be crossed: those people we already know, and those we have not yet met. To love the neighbour authentically – as Jesus bids us – requires that we go beyond our current circle of friends and acquaintances, and actively seek to encounter people we have not yet met -- images of God we have yet to recognize. As Jesus did, so we must do: we must do *this* in memory of him.

CONCLUSION

Eucharist as we know it cannot *only* be the Sunday Mass. Jesus is asking, surely, to be remembered not only in the formality of ritual but in the very texture of our daily lives. Sunday Mass may gather and scatter us, but between Sundays we are called to live with his abiding memory as the source and summit of our own lived discipleship and indeed our aspirations to be increasingly faithful.

Eucharist (capital E) is an essential part of our lives as Christians, but it must not become a selfish pursuit. Jesus gave his life for the life of the world, and the eucharist must allow our lives to overflow, to be poured out for the life of the world. It is not simply to maintain or sustain our own lives or our personal spirituality: Eucharist has a missionary or missional dimension, a centrifugal momentum, a life-giving potential for all God’s people, whether or not they practise or even believe.

The final injunction – the *ite, missa est* – reminds us that God’s eternal mission continues “on earth as it is in heaven”, through the faithful who are sent in the name of Jesus.

The Christmas carol reminds us of our need to gather (“Venite adoremus”); now it is time once more to scatter, with the word of Jesus in our ears and in our hearts: “By this they will know you are my disciples: that you love one another” (John 13:34-5). “Love one another as I have loved you” (15:12). “Behold! I am with you all days, until the end” (Matthew 28:20). And “Do *this* – all of it: everything I did for you, and everything you learned from me – in memory of me” (I Corinthians 11:25).