

Dear Associates and Friends,
The Lord is Risen, Alleluia!

Our Easter Vigil went well. Fr. Alberic had some practice sessions before the Holy Triduum liturgies. The four Vietnamese monks were sharing in our ceremonies for the first time. Fr. Paul led the Good Friday veneration of the Cross and the Exultet for the Easter candle, which Fr. Donald had done for many years.

Mercy Sunday, the octave of Easter, saw the canonizations of Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II. After a little thought, we celebrated the occasion by inviting the Nazareth hermits and the Franciscan Friars to attend Vespers, Benediction and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with us in our church. It was a very prayerful experience of our unity in Christ and His Church. Following this, we had a festive meal together (a Gaudeamus) in our refectory. Each group brought their own contribution to the menu. It was quite a Duke's Mixture.

Bro. Boniface's sister Evelyn died the week before Palm Sunday. He traveled to California for her funeral. He remembered and recognized her twelve children with a little prompting on their part. She was ten years younger than Bro. Boni. His youngest brother Bill still lives in California. Bro. Boniface waited patiently at the wrong terminal in Los Angeles for his return trip and missed his flight. They put him on another plane, so he returned safely, but a little later than expected.

The State Food Inspector made his yearly visit to our bakery. In the past, we were told that ours is one of the cleanest bakeries they must inspect. However, they always manage to find something. This year it was a question of testing the water of our well. The state requires us to send them a sample. They run the test, and send a report back to us. The test checks for microbes, not minerals.

Bro. Thomas dug out a good quantity of black dirt with his backhoe. This was dumped and spread on our new backyard garden area. Now the challenge is to construct a fence with an electric top and bottom wires to keep interested animals away from Fr. Peter's growing vegetables.

The Breaking of the Bread

They recognized Him in the breaking of the bread. What is this breaking of the bread?

St. Mark first introduces the idea in his gospel when Jesus multiplies the loaves and fishes to feed 5000 people.

Mark tells us that Jesus raised His eyes up to heaven, blessed and broke the bread, and gives it to His disciples to distribute to the people. At the Last Supper in Mark's Gospel, Jesus again takes bread, blesses it, breaks it and gives it to His disciples, but gives a whole new meaning and reality to His action by saying, "This is My Body." Then He takes the cup, blesses it and gives it to them saying, "This is My Blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."

St. Matthew adds that His Blood is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

St. Luke, in his gospel, says that at the Last Supper Jesus first tells His disciples that He has desired to eat this Passover with them, and then Jesus blesses and breaks the bread, and gives it to them saying, "This is My Body, which is given for you. Do this In Remembrance of Me."

St. John does not describe Jesus breaking bread at the Last Supper, but in the context of that farewell meal John has Jesus tell His disciples that no one has greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. He no longer calls them servants, but he does call them friends. They are His friends who keep His commands. They love Him if they keep His words, just as He loves the Father and keeps His commands. Jesus offers His priestly prayer to the Father, in which He says that He is sanctifying/consecrating Himself, so that those who believe in Him may be sanctified/consecrated.

All this is the language of sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus as high priest, by the breaking of the bread, is offering a liturgical real sacrifice of Himself as a sin offering in grateful and loving worship to God. He does this in order to obey and fulfill His Father's command. He gives those, who are united with Him in His sacrifice, a share in the fruit and blessing of His sacrifice. They eat the Body and drink the Blood of the new Passover Lamb, the sacramental spiritual food and drink, which nourishes their new covenant union with God in Christ.

The next day Christ, the high priest offers the same sacrifice of His Body and Blood in a physical way on the cross at Calvary. He offers the same prayer for the forgiveness of sins, the same worship of acceptance and loving obedience to the Father. When His work is complete, He breathes forth His sanctifying spirit as the fruit of His redeeming sacrifice.

The breaking of the bread and Calvary are not two different or two separate mysteries or realities. They are two essential parts of the one redeeming sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the high priest offering perfect worship in spirit and truth to God the Father, and He gives us a share in His priesthood and priestly action. He unites us with Himself as members of His Body, so that we offer ourselves with Him. We offer thanksgiving and praise, reparation and petition in union with Him to the Father in the sacrifice and sacrament of the Holy Eucharist in the Breaking of the Bread.

The Breaking of the Bread is Christ's Easter Gift of Himself to the Father.

The Breaking of the Bread is Christ's Easter Gift of Himself to us.

In Our Risen Savior and His Mother,
Your Ava Monks