



*Roofless Church, New Harmony IN
Philip Johnson, Architect, 1960*

THURSDAY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER At the Evening Mass

Every year, quietly, as evening falls on this day, Lent ends. The Paschal Triduum, the annual celebration of Easter – as Service & Sacrificial Meal, Passion & Death, Entombment, and Resurrection – begins. In other years, even in the midst of all the details that need tending to for the liturgies of these days, I am always struck by the quiet transition from Lent to Easter. It's one of those still moments, a movement so subtle it risks not being noticed at all. The Passover of the Lord begins as time passes.

This year everything is different. Because we can't gather for the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, with the good and right and sensible suspension of all public worship as precaution during this time of pandemic, I suspect, with the absence of the holy rites that every other year carry us across the threshold separating Lent from Easter, we might not give this passover any attention whatsoever.

Unless of course we intentionally do.

And that's one of the points of Christian worship anyway: that we are attentive fully, consciously, and actively. We put ourselves, by God's grace, into the action. Whatever, wherever that action is. We join ourselves to Christ.

Much is going on right now. A viral pandemic rages across the globe. Those afflicted suffer; many have died, many more will in the days and weeks ahead. Life has either come to a halt or has been greatly disrupted and altered for most of us. The ease with which we are accustomed to move about, the effortlessness in our patterns of consumption, the casualness of our relationships with others...these have been changed. The very notion, perhaps never expressed but still deep within us, that you and I can live life untroubled by any change whatsoever...well, even that has changed.

What do we do with change? Do we resist it, thereby giving it even more control over us; allowing it to define us? Do we ignore it, even though we can't – consider how much spiritual energy is wasted in denial? Or do we pick it up, somehow, and make a response that expands us beyond where we are right here, right now? What do we do with change?

“On the day before he was to suffer for our salvation and for the salvation of all, that is today, he took bread in his holy and venerable hands, and with eyes raised to heaven, to you, O God, his almighty Father, giving you thanks...” With the next morning's sunrise, he would be condemned to death; shortly thereafter sent out, under the weight of his cross, to trod his Via Dolorosa; nailed to the cross at the noon of the day and left in agony for three hours before death comes. And aware of all this, the night before, he prays “thank you, Father!”

He takes what will soon happen to him, and he makes what will soon happen to him, an acceptable offering. God be praised! Death becomes life! We are restored to our true selves! Endless blessing to those whose offerings are joined to his!

The Eucharist – the weekly continuation of our Baptism - is our participation in his Passion, Death, and Resurrection. It is our communion with him. Our communion in him. It is the pattern of our lives and our daily living. He calls us to be intentional; to be fully, consciously, and actively engaged. Eucharist is life for people alive. For people who know at last how to live.

May God Bless,
Fr. Grogan