

AS A MEMORIAL OF ME.

Every time the early Christians spoke of the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples, they always mentioned Jesus' special request: "*Do this as a memorial of me.*" That is the case with Luke the evangelist and Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

From the very beginning of the Christian era, the Last Supper was celebrated by Christians as a *Memorial of Jesus* that brought his presence to our midst and nourished our faith in Him, in his message and in his life offered for us until his end. Let us single out four special and meaningful parts of our Mass. We must bring them to life from within the community.

Listening to the Gospel, we bring back to life Jesus himself whenever we listen to the Gospel narratives and messages. The Gospels, in fact, were written with the sole purpose of preserving Jesus' memory, and strengthening the faith of his followers.

From the gospel narratives we do not learn any doctrine, but we witness Jesus' life style and behaviour that serve to inspire us and imitate him in our own lives. Hence, we must read and listen to him with an attitude of the disciples that want to learn how to think, feel, love and live as He did.

Remembering the Last Supper, we recall the saving power of Jesus as we listen to his words: "*This is my body. See me in these pieces of bread, as I deliver myself for you until death. This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This blood is shed for the forgiveness of your sins. Every time you drink this cup you are proclaiming my death. I have loved you till the end.*"

At that precise moment, we confess our faith in Jesus Christ, summarizing the mystery of our salvation: "*We announce your death, we proclaim your resurrection. Come, Lord Jesus.*" We acknowledge that Jesus has been our Saviour.

The prayer of Jesus that we recite before Communion is the one that Jesus himself taught us. First, we identify ourselves with the three great desires that Jesus always kept in his heart: absolute respect for God, the coming of his kingdom of justice and the fulfilment of his Father's will. Then, we conclude with the four petitions to the Father: bread for everyone, pardon and forgiveness, freedom from temptations and deliverance from evil.

The communion with Jesus we receive, poor as we are, with open hands: we receive the Bread of life, as we make an act of faith, and we welcome in silence Jesus in our hearts as well as in our lives: "Lord, I want to be in communion with you, follow in your steps, live by your Spirit and work in your project to make this world more just and fair."

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