

**THE EUCHARIST (Mass, Holy Communion, the Liturgy, all different names for the same thing) – A Guide for Confirmation Candidates**

by Fr Len

What is the Eucharist about? It is about giving **THANKS**. We call our service **EUCHARIST**, which comes from the Greek word for **THANKSGIVING**.

In it we give God thanks for creating us, - recreating humanity with Jesus Christ, and drawing us into his new people, the Church, given power and life by the Holy Spirit. We also call it **HOLY COMMUNION** because we believe that through the eating/drinking at this special meal Jesus comes to us in a special way. At the time of the Passover when the Jews remembered that deliverance by God from slavery in Egypt, Jesus shared the last supper with his disciples. It was the last night before he was crucified, the night of his betrayal. He identified the bread and wine at the meal with his body and blood. The next day it would be broken and shed. "Do this" he said "in remembrance of me"

St. Paul reminds us that Christ did **FOUR** things - and so do we. (This is the earliest account we have. St. Paul writing to his house-church at Corinth in the late 40's AD). *The tradition which I handed on to you came to me from the Lord himself: that the Lord Jesus, on the night of his arrest, took bread and, after giving thanks to God, broke it and said: "This is my body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me." In the same way, he took the cup after supper, and said: "This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me." For every time you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes.* [1Corinthians 11.23-29 NEB]

Jesus took bread, gave thanks over it, broke the bread, shared it. We take bread and wine. The priest gives thanks over them in a long prayer called the **EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**. It includes what Jesus did at the Last Supper. The bread is then broken and we approach the altar to receive it.

We **thank** God the Father and Creator for sending Christ his Son as our Saviour. We do this by offering our prayers, praises: indeed our very lives and selves to God *in union with* the offering of Christ who died for us. We remember Christ's death re-calling that once-for-all event in history into the present to release its power and goodness. In so doing we believe Christ becomes present using the transformed bread and wine to feed us with his life.

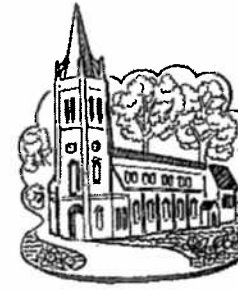
**How does this happen?**

The Holy Spirit makes it possible – but in a way we can never fully understand. But we believe God uses the bread and wine to come to us. When we do what Jesus did at the Last Supper the bread and wine are changed - they are given a new value, meaning, purpose, significance.

When we eat and drink the bread and wine Christ is truly present to and in us. It is as if we have opened the door and let him into our lives.

**What must I do?**

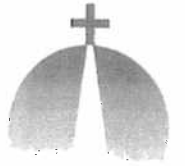
1. I must come to Holy Communion regularly (not just when I feel like it. We don't go to school or work when we feel like it.) We should come every Sunday and special times like Easter and Christmas.
2. When I come to Communion I must prepare myself, collect my thoughts, look at my life. Some phrases from the psalms or hymns can help me. Or the prayers at the beginning of the service booklet
3. At Church I need to be still. Ask God's Holy Spirit to help me worship. Tell God the thoughts of my heart.
4. At Communion I need to be prayerful. Perhaps repeat a prayer.
5. After Communion I should:
  - a. Say thank you.
  - b. Talk to God simply, especially if something is on my mind.
  - c. Ask God to bless my family/friends/others/ those in need.
  - d. Ask him to be with me in the coming week; not to let me forget him, and to bless me in all I do.



# THE NEWSLETTER

## ALL SAINTS CHURCH

### Upper Norwood



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### The Vicar's Monthly Letter

Dear friends,

For some time now I have been leading confirmation classes in preparation for the Confirmation service we are having at All Saints on the 9th of October. Bishop Michael formerly of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, will be here to celebrate the occasion with us. Questions often emerge in such classes. One of these is rather fundamental, namely, What is the Church for? It may seem an obvious question, and you may think it has an obvious answer. I wonder what your answer would be. Sometimes we have unexamined notions regarding important questions that we would do well to bring out in order to better understand what we are about as a Church.

One aspect of the matter that needs to be brought into consideration is that the church has been called into existence as a community. It is not just a matter of individuals who happen to have the same interests, or be related to each other by the same background or tastes. This is not a side issue. A colleague of mine in a recent chapter, (meeting of local clergy), brought this matter up. Today, in a way that hasn't been true in this country before, we have in many congregations a variety of different backgrounds and traditions and have in the past existed quite separate from one another. I am one who very much values these developments, but I would have to admit that this change in the nature of many local congregations brings challenges that have to be acknowledged and worked at. A matter that needs to be understood is that the church is not about our personal tastes and habits; it is about the most fundamental and oldest account of the church in the New Testament, that the church is the people of God. There are literally dozens of figures used for the church in the New Testament; bride of Christ, building, plant, priesthood, race, temple. But one stands out above the rest, and has been the most influential. This is figure of the church as the body of Christ. Behind this lies something fundamental in the thinking of St. Paul about the church. For Paul, the sufferings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not merely historical events from long ago. They were also cosmic events and that therefore Christ's disciples will produce these events in their own lives. Christians must suffer with Christ, die with Christ (in baptism), and rise with Christ. This is because all Christians share in this cosmic act of salvation and are "in Christ". This has a number of meanings. One of them is that in a way we are the space for Christ to develop. The church is the place where Christ will operate unhindered, although it has to be admitted only at the end of time will that be true in its fullness.

If these things are true we need to lift our minds and concerns beyond the personal pre-occupations and our likes and dislikes to the true purpose and nature of the church that we are called to be. The Church is called to be a "first-fruits", a sign and instruments of God's kingdom. It is this great vision of the church that we need to respond to with our hearts and minds.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Leonard