

October 6, 2024, World Communion Sunday “The Mystic Meal of Unity” Luke 22:14-20

“Do this in remembrance of me.” Luke 22:19

Today, Christians from all over the world come together to celebrate World Communion Sunday. This is in obedience to our Lord’s command to always remember him and God’s love for us. **It's amazing to think about it: Christians from different countries**, speaking different languages, belonging to different tribes, and living on different continents are all doing what we are doing this morning. They gather as brothers and sisters in Christ to share in the Communion meal with Jesus. I wonder how many of us there are in total. I also wonder about each person's challenges in their journey with God.

Just as we celebrated this important aspect of our Christian faith this morning, **it was done in different settings**—in a Cathedral or under a tree, with bread or yams, wine or Grape juice, or other beverages such as Coca-Cola! What all of us Christians do today is to remember again God’s love for us by giving his only son for our redemption!

This sacrament of the Lord's Supper has various names, such as "The Eucharist," "Communion," "The Love Feast," and "The Table of the Lord." Just as the titles for this practice vary, so will the ways in which our fellow believers participate, the types of bread and wine used, and the interpretations that people and their religious leaders have of this ritual.

The act of receiving communion can take different forms. Some individuals may choose to receive a piece of bread in their hands and then either drink from the cup or not. Others may tear a piece of bread from a loaf and dip it into the communal cup. Alternatively, some may remain seated in their pews and receive pre-sliced bread and individual cups passed to them. Additionally, some may partake in communion as part of a full meal, either at a table in a place of worship, or in a church hall, or at home.

After the words of consecration are prayed, some people believe that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus, while others see the sacrament as a significant memorial with Jesus being spiritually present in a special way but not physically present in the elements. There are significant differences in how people around the world view this sacrament.

Some people believe that their way of practicing certain traditions is the only correct way. For example, some traditions only allow people who have publicly declared their faith to participate in certain rituals, while others welcome young children. Some insist that participants must belong to a specific denomination and community, while others welcome anyone who loves the Lord and wants to follow his path. There will be a wide variety of practices and beliefs as we celebrate the Lord's Supper, but what unites us is that we all consider it important. This is so important to us that we may even be willing to argue with each other about its meaning.

What does it mean for us to be in communion with each other and God when we have such a wide variety of practices and understandings? Where is our "community" given our differences? What defines us as a community, both locally and globally, is that we are all involved in the same conversation. We all see ourselves as followers of Christ and are working

to find the best way, the right way, and, for some, the only way to live as his people in response to his calling.

Part of what makes us a Worldwide Communion is not that we agree with one another in everything but that we believe the discussions we have - even our arguments - are important. There is nothing wrong with our differences of opinion about what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is not good, what is true and what is not true. These differences in interpretation are not a source of division but rather a reflection of the depth and complexity of our faith. They remind us that we are all on a unique spiritual journey and that our individual perspectives must be respected and accepted.

Consider your own family. Do perfect agreements exist? Are there not members with differing beliefs and preferences? Despite disputes, families still come together at mealtimes and on special occasions. They give thanks for the opportunity to be together and the food provided, regardless of dietary differences. They seek to bless one another without demanding conformity.

The church around the world today is a family. We are the family of God—a family formed by our common desire to follow Christ Jesus, who is both our brother and our Lord. We are the people of God, called together and given life through Christ Jesus our Lord. We are the ones who trust in Jesus, and, like Paul, all the apostles and the saints strive to follow him faithfully and to keep the special law he gave us—the commandment that we love one another as he has loved us.

Our communion with God and one another is found in the things we share that are of God and that we fully agree about, as well as in those things that we share that are of God but on which we differ. Our communion is in Christ Jesus, whom we seek to follow in various ways. **This communion is a mystic communion, not limited by time or space, but realized wherever Christ's followers have sought, are seeking, and will yet seek to do God's will.** This communion is realized deep inside us when, in humility, gentleness, and patience, we bear with one another in love and accept God's gifts with grateful and humble prayer.

Sharing in the body and blood of Christ reminds us of our connection with Jesus and with one another. **It's important to remember that what unites us is not common education, race, income levels, politics, nationality, accents, jobs, or anything else of that sort. Christians come together because they have all been loved by Jesus himself.**

The Lord's Supper signifies the covenant we share and is sealed by the blood of our Lord. Through it, Jesus reminds us that His unwavering commitment is the sustenance our hearts truly need. If we truly believed this, it would transform us into different people. He is everything I am not and forgives everything I am and should not be.

Do you feel a need for Him today? You are welcome to come and dine at the Lord's table supper!