

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Lord's Supper in the Early Church Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time Monday,
September 12, 2016 8:15 AM **1 Cor 11:17-26, 33; Lk 7:1-10** (The Most Holy
Name of Mary) (It ceased to be a banquet because of the divisions and the selfishness of
those who did not invite those who did not have anything to join them.)

In the letter we are reading from St. Paul to the Corinthians the subject has come up about the Lord's supper. Many people do not understand this particular reading because they don't understand the context of **the Lord's supper in the early Church**. It was something like our concert a few weeks ago where everyone brought some food and a couple chairs and clustered together and ate, and sometimes a friend might sit down and share. What was happening is there were many people that came to these gatherings and they didn't have any food. And **the people that did have food did not invite them to sit with them. This is the division that he is referring to.**

Now the Eucharist would be shared at this type of assembly, and **everyone would share the Eucharist, but some people that's all they had to eat.** And of course it's not enough unless you are Theresa Newman and live off the Eucharist, but most of us cannot do that. So Paul regarded this whole thing as a warped situation, and so he is actually angry. He says, "Do you not have houses in which you can eat and drink." So **because of St. Paul gradually this whole practice changed, and only the Eucharist itself was celebrated, was shared. People were not allowed to bring any more food or drink.** So it ceased to be actually a banquet. And it ceased to be a banquet because of the divisions and the selfishness of those who did not invite those who did not have anything to join them. And **also there was an issue of drunkenness with some,** which of course we had no trouble with ourselves. But that's human nature; that is the brokenness of human nature.

Now in time actually theologians reflected on this and they said that **the brokenness of humanity is what is represented in the broken bread**, so that we do gather actually as broken; and **it is feeding on the Lord that brings us healing and unity**. But of course we have to have a disposition to receive it. It won't be shoved down our throats, so to speak. **We have to want this unity**. So it is important that when we do gather for our Eucharist we recognize that we are a broken body. We are in need of healing. **We are in need of restoration, and the power to do this comes from the Holy Spirit**, which is of course the Spirit of Christ that was at work in him.

Now in the story in the gospel Jesus was astonished that this pagan had such faith in his word; that's what it comes down to. "Just say the word." That's the faith that astonished Jesus. A lot of people knew that **Jesus performed healings**. How they accounted for this, I do not know. But **here is a man that believed it was his word**. It is important that we recognize how **faith is a component to the healing we need and that others need** as well, as a body, as individuals, as a nation, as a world.