



The Distribution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My ✠ Body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them and said, “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ Blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

“Come, for everything is now ready!” So goes the invitation in the parable of the great banquet (St. Luke 14:17). Likewise, what our Lord has prepared for you by His incarnation, death, and resurrection, by His word and institution, by the Office of the Holy Ministry and His called servant, your pastor, He has given, not to mention by produce of grape and grain, now awaits the Christian for eating and drinking has been prepared for you!

The pastor, whose duty it is to be the *“steward of the mysteries”* (1 Cor. 4:1), is Christ’s instrument in distributing His Supper to His people. St. Paul carefully teaches us that the Lord’s Supper is here to be given, to be served; that to he who is prepared worthily to receive, the Supper is unto salvation; but, to the one unworthy and unprepared, it can do great harm (for example, when taken in unrepentance, or by one who does not discern the body of Christ or whose heart is set in some respect against the truth of God’s Word taught from His altar (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-22; 11:17-34).

While the pastor does not see into hearts (and, in many respects, be glad he can’t); he can perceive what a person confesses and what outward acts known to him indicate. It would be evil of a pastor to give the Lord’s Supper to one he knew ought not to receive it, for which it would not be *“for you, for the forgiveness of sins,”* but instead *“sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.”* The pastor, therefore, must practice care and discernment.

Likewise, the people must also come with reverence and in faith. Believing they are to receive the true Body and Blood of Jesus, they treat the sacred in a proper manner. At the words of distribution, *“The true body/blood of Christ,”* the people may say softly, *“Amen,”* confessing faith in our Lord’s words, which make it so.

Old traditions suggest a couple of brief, quiet personal prayers before receiving the Lord’s Body and Blood. Before receiving the host: *“Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and [Thy] servant will be healed”* (St. Matthew 8:8). And, before receiving the cup: *“What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord”* (Ps 116:12-13).

The Peace of the Lord be with you always,

Pastor Jeff Patterson ✠