

The Last Supper

Scripture Reading — 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
1 Corinthians 11:26 —

When preparing for a communion service, I'm often reminded of Leonardo da Vinci's vivid mural The Last Supper (1498). This painting portrays Jesus and his twelve disciples at a dinner table, at the last meal he shared with them before his arrest and death.

The painting brilliantly depicts the facial expression of every apostle after hearing Jesus' prediction that one of them would betray him. The disciples display different reactions to the news, with varying degrees of surprise, shock, and anger. Even the traitor Judas is taken aback by the sudden revelation of his plan.

What would be our reaction if we were among the apostles at that memorable supper? How do we act when we are reminded of Jesus' death on the cross because of our sin?

Like us, the apostle Paul didn't participate in the Last Supper. He became a follower of Jesus later. But in today's Scripture he briefly recounts the story and draws a direct link to our regular celebrations of the Lord's Supper. Paul declares that at our communion celebrations we proclaim Christ crucified. When we break the bread and drink the cup, we picture our Savior suffering for us on the cross.

When we do that, are we saddened by our own failings? And are we surprised by the power and extent of God's grace? Both responses are necessary.

Prayer

Father, we are surprised by your grace and mercy. Whenever we celebrate communion, help us grow in the saving knowledge of Christ. Amen.

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