



Eucharist: God's Way of Embracing Us

Discussion Guide or Journal Questions | A video workshop with Ron Rolheiser | page 2/2

PART ONE

- 1) A ritual says something that words cannot communicate. Christ left us the ritual of Eucharist. The Word of God gathers us and Eucharist touches us in a physical embrace. The Body of Christ means Jesus, the Eucharist and us, the body of believers. We are the body of Christ on earth.
~When do you feel like you are part of the Body of Christ?

- 2) In the early Church, only those fully initiated into the Church were allowed to be present at the Eucharist. There was a deep respect for it; it was considered so deeply intimate, a physical communion.
~When have you experienced a time when "words no longer had power", but relied on an action instead.

- 3) The Eucharist has multiple facets--
 - a) It is the intensification of our membership in the body of Christ. This is my body, this is my blood not only means bread and wine it is that the people become changed into the body and blood of Christ. In St. Augustine's words, "Receive what you are." We come to the Eucharist to become like Christ.
~How have you felt changed by the Eucharist?

 - b) Eucharist is the new manna. There are different theologies of the Eucharist. The New Testament Gospel writers for Matthew, Mark and Luke were writing to different communities. In these accounts the Eucharist is instituted at the Last Supper. In John's Gospel, written much latter and to a different community situation, Eucharist is linked to manna, the bread of life. It is the daily feeding of people by God; a daily embrace by God.
~Are you more conscious of Eucharist as the enactment of the Last Supper or as a daily feeding, an embrace by God?

 - c) Eucharist as sacrifice. It is a ritual, and it isn't to be explained rationally. By ritually reenacting the Eucharist we believe it is actually happening and so are able to enter into the Mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. We go to Eucharist not just to consume Christ, but to enter into the event, the Mystery.
~What do you feel about entering into this Mystery in which God will embrace you?

 - d) Eucharist is both a sacrifice AND a meal. It exists in order that Christians can get together to enjoy one another. Eucharist exists for people to get together for the sake of getting together, to be in community.
~What is your experience of being a part of the community at Eucharist?

 - e) Eucharist is a prayer for the world; not a prayer of private devotion. We pray not for ourselves (although we are included as being part of the world). We pray for both the goodness and the pains in our world.
~How does this expand how you think of the Eucharist?

For immediate attention or for a free catalog call Videos With Values 1-800-233-4629!

This study guide can be downloaded from our web site: www.videoswithvalues.org



Eucharist: God's Way of Embracing Us

Discussion Guide or Journal Questions | A video workshop with Ron Rolheiser | page 2/2

PART II

- 1) There are two kinds of waiting:
 - a) conscious--that which consumes the mind
 - b) unconscious— that which occurs below the surface of awareness.~How do you react when you wait?
~In what ways do you wait for Christ?
- 2) Waiting is an important part of our lives. Henri Nouwen says that 98% of our life is spent waiting for something else to happen in our life.
~What are you presently waiting for in your life? ~Are you comfortable with waiting?
- 3) Nothing can take your loneliness/restlessness away. No one can make you happy in every aspect of your life (job, career, marriage, children, etc.). Until you are embraced by God fully, there will always be an unfulfilled part of your life.
~Why do you believe or disbelieve this idea?
- 4) The concept of waiting is also found in anthropology— fairy tales contain psychological and spiritual waiting (before we had Sacred Scripture).
~Recall the fairy tales from your childhood; how was “waiting” a part of the story?
- 5) Our lives are filled with limits, and we are not prepared for frustrations.
We long for the “finished symphony” which we will never get in this life.
~How are you growing more comfortable (or less comfortable) with the limitations of your life?
- 6) Eucharist is meant to be a vigil. “To do vigil” means to gather in a group and consciously or unconsciously wait for someone (such as Jesus) or something to come and change our lives in order for us to be more complete; to reshape us so we can move on to the next chapter of our lives.
~In your spiritual life or personal life, who helps you keep vigil?
~How do they help you to do this?
- 7) In “Quaker silence” people sit in silent prayer as a community and ask God to come and give you something you cannot give yourself. Eucharist is a ritual in which we are with other people, asking God to change our life. No one can change their life alone; you cannot change your life by will power. Alone, we fall apart.
~How has this been part of your experience?
- 8) Eucharist is God's embrace of us. Eucharist is compared to a mother who embraces her child who has grown tired at the end of the afternoon. The child is frustrated and begins to torment the cat. At some point words will not soothe the child so the mother picks up the child. Now calmed, the child can be set down again. In the Eucharist, we are that child of God; our lives filled with tensions. In the Eucharist God embraces us and this help to take the tension away.
~ What is your reaction to this analogy?

For immediate attention or for a free catalog call Videos With Values 1-800-233-4629!

This study guide can be downloaded from our web site: www.videoswithvalues.org