

## Holy Thursday

**This is my body given up for you, this is my blood given for all**

*“It is more important to be together than to be right”*

Oblate Fr. Fr. Ronald Rolheizer offers this wonderful reflection on the meaning of Eucharist.

*“The experience of God is the experience of relationships. This means that dealing with each other in community, at the dinner table, over a bottle of wine or an argument, not to mention simple giving and receiving hospitality, are not secular experiences. They are the stuff of church, the place where the life of God flows through us. God can never be understood, but God can be known, experienced, tasted, related to in love and friendship. This has huge consequences for how we understand religious experience. It means that God is more domestic than monastic (monks will be the first to tell you that). It means that in coming to know God, the dinner table is more important than the theology classroom, and the practice of grateful hospitality is more important than the practice of right religion. The most pernicious heresies are not those of formal dogma, but those of a culture of individualism that invites us to believe that we are self-sufficient, that we can have community on our own terms, and that we can have God without dealing with each other.” (Catholic N.W. Progress, June 14, 2001)*

Do you remember that marvelous story, “*Velveteen Rabbit*” by Margery Williams? This is an excerpt from that story which offers a wonderful illustration on the meaning of Eucharist. It is a conversation between the Velveteen Rabbit and the Skin Horse.

*“What is real?” asked the rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side. “Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?” “Real isn’t how you’re made,” said the skin horse. “It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long time, not just to play with, but really loves you. Then you become real.” “Does it hurt?” asked the rabbit. “Sometimes,” said the skin horse, for he was always truthful. “When you are real, you don’t mind being hurt.” “Does it happen all at once, or like being wound up bit by bit?” “It doesn’t happen all at once. You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are real, most of your hair has been loved off and your eyes drop out and you get loose at the joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all because once you are real, you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.”*

The meaning of Eucharist is poetically described in a novel about a young boy in South Africa. Its title is, “*The Power of One*,” by Bryce Courtenay.

The boy, Pekay, is being told by his mentor, “*Peekay, God is too busy making the sun come up and go down and watching so the moon floats just right in the sky to be concerned with such rubbish. Only man wants always God should be there to condemn this one and save that one. God is too busy training the bees to make honey and every morning opening up all the new flowers for business. It is better to get on with the business of living and minding your own*

*business, and when God sees this, he may just let you flower for a day or a night. But don't just be pestering and begging and telling him all your little complaints that will spoil his day. Absoloodle."*

Eucharist not about the change that takes place in the host and wine; it is about the change that takes place in us because of which we have no choice about whom we help, how long, and what price we are willing to pay. Tonight we are commemorating the institution of the Eucharist, not only here at Mass, but throughout our lives. Eucharist is not just an act of worship, it is a lifestyle.

*In coming to know God, the dinner table is more important than the theology classroom*

*Once you are real, you can't be ugly*

*When God sees you getting on with the business of living,  
he may just let you flower for a day or a night.*

*Thanks be to God!*