



### Remembering Jesus

**(as he would like to be remembered!)**

How do we remember Jesus? Perhaps more precisely how did the first generation of believers remember him, after all our faith is shaped by their memory? So what shaped their memory?

Clearly the actions, words, travels, miracles, healings, meals and experience of being in the company of Jesus are the stuff of the memories of the earliest disciples. Yet they are remembered in a particular way. And this way comes from Jesus himself. At the final meal he shared with his closest disciples, that meal in which he prepared himself for his upcoming trials and indeed tried to win back Judas, the prophet and teacher commended to his disciples that they remember him in the blessing and sharing of bread and cup: *do this in remembrance of me.*

We are culturally and historically removed from the ancient Jewish sense of the word 'remember'. It signifies far more than recollection or calling to mind. Rather it carries the sense of 'making present'. When applied to the works of God, to 'remember' what God has done implies bringing to the present the grace of previous actions of God. In particular it is a term applied to ritual. When in worship the Jewish people recalled what God had done to save them, they were making manifest that grace of salvation in their midst.

And so Jesus teaches his followers that to bring his presence and all it bears to their time after his death they need to remember him over the blessing of bread and cup. Jesus sets this as the primary context for their retrieval of memories about him and also their interpretation of those memories. In a sense the community of believers is most faithful in its belief when it sets all its understanding of Jesus within a broadly Eucharistic context. This is not to reduce our comprehension of Jesus to the Mass! Rather it opens us to the implications arising from the knowledge that the early Eucharistic worship of the first generations of believers was pivotal in developing and disseminating the Christian scriptures. Further it grounds our belief in Jesus in his own actions and teachings on earth, in particular his presence at the meal table. Sharing a meal with Jesus is one of the most significant revelations of what it is on earth to be in the reign of God: sinners are forgiven, the righteous rebuked, teaching is offered, the sick are healed, all eat in equality and inclusiveness. The very meals themselves are a reminder that we are all fed and nourished by the bounty and grace of God. Most importantly they teach us that no one in God's world should be hungry, no one!

How then to remember Jesus? We remember him in blessing, in sharing, in the meaning of bread as food and wine as joy, in companionship, care for the poor, listening

to the word, healing and forgiveness. This is the manifold 'remembrance' of Jesus, encapsulated in the Eucharist but broadening into every part of our lives and culture. That is how he wished for us to remember him!

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