

Throughout much of history ... save the last hundred years or so ... there was not much a **normal** person could do to escape from the hard realities of life. Certainly not like today ... when everything seems to be geared to help us indulge in **escapist** pursuits. We plunk down thirty bucks for a movie, popcorn and a coke and live in a fantasy world for a couple hours (that's what people tell me ... I haven't actually been for many years) or we can plop down in front of the TV ... where the most incredibly complicated problems are solved in an hour ... minus commercials. We also have video games and many other ways of escaping reality. Perhaps all these pursuits are just examples of buying into the wisdom of our world. In our lives we are constantly confronted with the choices of facing and dealing with the harsh realities of life or engaging in escapism.

In our Gospel ... Peter ... a subscriber of the wisdom of the world ... can't bring himself ... to accept Jesus message ... as He **begins** to explain what **must** happen in God's plan for the fulfillment of the Paschal Mystery. And ... even though Peter had declared his belief ... that Jesus was the son of God ... it would seem that his faith would not be **solidified** until Pentecost.

So I find myself wondering what was going through his mind at the Last Supper ... as Our Lord first gave us His precious gift Of **Eucharist**. We know that he would try to refuse to let His Lord wash his feet and ... would react violently against Jesus' arrest by cutting off a man's ear ... and after protesting that he would never **deny** Jesus ... he would do just that! So did Peter realize what was happening when Jesus said: "this is My Body ... this is My blood!" ... I think not! It would not be until Pentecost when he and indeed all the apostles would receive the Holy Spirit that he could finally "see as God sees!" For indeed Peter and the others were handicapped by the wisdom of our world which made God's gift of Eucharist and indeed the whole Paschal Mystery seem foolish ... a tale for children!

Sadly many today have that same problem. How is one to believe that our Lord is present in the **people** ... in the **Word** ... in the **priest** ... and perhaps **most** difficult ... Body, Blood Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist! The wisdom of our world will **never** get us there! Only the Wisdom of God ... which will come to us only if we are willing to make the investment of faith ... only if we are willing to look **foolish** in the eyes of the world! And if we **are** willing to make that investment we are rewarded with the graces received at our baptisms ... our confirmations and ultimately receiving the Eucharist itself. St. Paul puts it this way telling us we must: be transformed by the renewal of our minds, that we may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

When we receive the Eucharist ... Jesus Christ is in us ... and we are in Christ. Just what does that mean? Well for one thing we must not waste the grace that we receive when we receive Communion. We must **discard** non-Christ-like behavior. We must set **aside** all hatred and ill feelings toward others. We must forgive and pray for our enemies. In short we must ask ourselves: What would Christ think ... what would Christ do? And do our best to think and behave the same? To receive our Savior so intimately without trying to change ourselves ... without **trying** to make ourselves more Christ-like ... is to reject God's grace.

Does this mean Eucharist will make us perfect? Of course not! We are **still** human ... we are **still** sinners! Pope Francis has explained it this way: "When we receive the Eucharist ... Jesus knows that we are sinners and we make many mistakes, but he does not give up joining his life to ours." Describing the Eucharist, not as the reward of saints, but as the Bread of sinners, the Pope said that each time we receive the Bread of Life, the Lord comes to give new **meaning** to our frailties. "The Eucharist" ... the Pope said, "heals because it joins us with Jesus ... ". He goes on to explain: "that it makes us assimilate his way of living ... to respond to evil with good" ... but only if we have the mindset to be willing to cooperate with God's grace! Come O Lord! ... Our souls are indeed thirsting for you!