

Dear Friends,

It was during the Last Supper that Jesus commanded his followers to celebrate the Eucharist.

“Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, **“This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.”** (Luke 22:19) And St. Paul wrote in the First Letter to the Corinthians, **“... the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”** (1Cor 11:23-24) Jesus’ use of the words “memory” and “remembrance” are not the same in the way we use them. When we say “memory”, it means calling something to mind; remembering an event that took place in the past. We remember different events of our lives - like graduation day, wedding day, and so on.

In Jewish tradition, memory, or making ritual remembrance of something, is much more than just recalling the event that took place in the past. Remembering means to recall and ritually make that event present again in a real way. In this context, the Passover Supper of Jewish people recalls the Exodus from Egypt and the miraculous passing through the Red Sea into freedom. The understanding is that one generation, led by Moses, did this long time ago, but at the Passover Meal, that event is ritually made present again, in a real way, for those at table to experience.

The Eucharist was instituted in the context of the Passover Meal. So, we make ritually present the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is the new Exodus – the Exodus from slavery to sin into freedom of God’s children. At our Eucharistic gathering, we are not just remembering an event which took place long time ago, we are making it present to participate in it.

Just as at the Last Supper Jesus gave his body and blood to his disciples, so the consecrated bread and wine give us the real presence of Christ. At the Eucharistic gathering, we ritually making the event of the past – the death and resurrection of the Lord – present again in real way. The real presence is in both a person and in an event.

Lord, increase our faith,
Fr. Krzysztof Kardzis

