

Do You Love Me?

Intimacy is often described as an affectionate or loving personal relationship with another person or group. Many of us know that many times, the nature of this loving personal relationship is lived out within the context of meals in the family. For instance, when we gather around the dinner table to dine, it becomes a wonderful way to be with each other in a very intimate way.

In today's gospel, Jesus invites his disciples to eat a meal with him, a meal he prepared for them. Jesus takes bread and gives it to them as he did at the Last Supper. It shows that this meal prefigures the Eucharistic meal that all of us partake of every day, where we meet the risen Christ. In the Eucharist, Christ gives us his Body to chew and his Precious Blood to drink, so that all the nutrients from our Savior will nourish and enrich our souls, and our lives will become intimately one with Christ. We become what we receive.

This Eucharistic theme from the gospel makes today's celebration more unique and exciting. For today, May 5, Isabella Jimmerson, Alia and Anthony Ornelas, and Isabella Schwartz will receive their First Communion. Jesus has prepared a meal of his Body and Blood and invited Isabella, Alia, Anthony, and Isabella to eat with him. Today, they say a resounding "Yes" to Jesus' invitation. As they say "Amen" to these words "The Body of Christ" and "The Blood of Christ," our First Communicants, just like Peter, are responding "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." All of us, too, express the same sentiments when we receive communion: "Yes, Lord, you know that we love you."

But Jesus loved us first, and he asks us to learn from his love. Consider how Jesus described to Peter what it means to love him: *"Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go. He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God."* Jesus was the first to stretch out his hands and was led to a very gruesome experience of the cross where he laid down his life for us to enable us to become one with him. When we come forward to the altar to receive communion, this intimate relationship with Jesus becomes more and more imbedded in our hearts and souls every day.

Today, I encourage you to please say a prayer for our First Communicants so that the grace of the Eucharist will always abide in their hearts.

***--Fr. Anthony Ahamefule
Parish Priest***