

The suffering began with a meal. All through his life they criticized Jesus not just for what he said, but for whom he ate with. It was fitting that his last and greatest hour began with a meal.

Everyone remembers that meal. Most meals are memorable for the aroma of the food, the sound of laughter, or the joyous occasion. But we remember the Last Supper for other reasons. Luke remembers it as the time when Jesus condemned his betrayer, when the apostles argued about who was the greatest, when Jesus shivered at his coming trial, when Satan fought for the souls of the apostles, when Peter learned he would deny Christ, when Jesus suggested the apostles sell their coats in order to buy swords, and when they drank the blood and ate the body of their master. What Luke does not remember for us is what else they ate. He never mentions lamb, fish, fruit, or vegetable. No one remembered the food. They only remembered the gloom.

Yet, in the darkness of that night, Jesus handed us hope-- His Body, His Blood, the food of our salvation. The darkest night in history could not squelch the presence of Jesus. His flame could not be extinguished, and it still burns bright.

My sisters and brothers, our lives, too, are crowded with darkness. We eat **our** meals amidst betrayal, denial, arguments, and trials. The darkness fights the flame of our faith. But, Jesus is present in our Eucharist. God is hidden in bread and wine. God is hidden in argumentative homes. God is hidden in the homeless of our city. God is hidden in the sick, the unemployed, the addicts, and the aching of the human heart.

When we share a meal with those who suffer, we proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes again.