

Jesus is pushing up against the boundaries that make life so precious, that give life its meaning. We may think that such boundaries, all the limitations of mortality, mean that we should get as much out of each day and one another, as possible – a race to the top which is really a race to the bottom, to the lowest common denominator of ‘me, me, me’. But Jesus turns this on its head by offering himself as an example of life as a precious opportunity, not to save oneself but to save others. Today’s gospel takes place within the context of the Last Supper and his imminent death and is a commentary on what the eucharist is really about: not a self-indulgence, grace for me, or even *us*, and our assurance of heaven, but grace given to us for the sake of others. This, of course, is teaching you to suck eggs but the reality of each day, of living in community, or family, or even alone, will challenge us to do just this: to live each eucharist as, not for ourselves only, but for others, and if someone such as Peter doesn’t get it yet, after several years, we presume, of living close to Jesus, you can be sure that we, too, can easily lead mistaken Christian lives, even now, after so many years practice.

The temptation to put ‘me’ first is always there. How to put others first without becoming a ‘doormat’ Christian, is another story, but the beginning is always the same: to hew closely to Christ so that our service of one another is true. This is the dynamic of faith, once again, in allowing God free play in us; the free play of love which inevitably involves suffering; the dispossession of self for a greater love to have its say.

Br John Mayhead
Monastery of Christ Our Saviour