

It's a function of a priest to offer hospitality – Melchizedek, who is probably both priest and king of Jerusalem, offers Abraham hospitality in the form of both bread and wine and a blessing. He is meeting his most fundamental need. – acceptance by another under the guise of that other most fundamental need, food. *'And Abraham gave him a tithe of everything'* - gives him in return something material to also acknowledge this more deeper need of acceptance by another, this need which goes all the way back to God, this recognition that there is a source and sustainer of our need to love and be loved, a beginning and end that underpins and is the reason for all creation. It's all very material and spiritual at one and the same time. A few days ago, I was privileged to bless a marriage of thirty years, or rather to be present as the couple renewed their vows, exchanged rings and blessed each other. It began with the placing of a bouquet of flowers from the bride's garden – she's the gardener in this partnership, and ended with a tour around the monastery garden and my giving them a fine bouquet of freshly picked lettuce. An exchange of gifts which neatly topped and tailed the occasion and spoke volumes about that most fundamental need that we all have – the acceptance by another. It's a priestly function we all share.

And so to Christ in his offering of himself, body and spirit, as a means of bringing us into God's kingdom, into that total acceptance of us which is what God is all about, the creator and sustainer of all that is. One doesn't need any elaborate theories to know this – only the reception of his body and blood under the guise of bread and wine and, by extension, the handing on of this tradition, this reality, in our own reception and acceptance of one another. Share a meal or anything material and we share in God's kingdom – we become a blessing for one another, a blessing that goes all the way back to God.

Br John Mayhead
Monastery of Christ Our Saviour