



April 5

The Sacrament of the Altar

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

To ponder

Our bodies are the most intimate places in which we live out our lives. They are the most intimate places from which we connect ourselves with the world, from which we form relationships. We cannot separate our minds, our spiritual lives, or ourselves from our bodily existence. In that sense, it is really true that we do not have bodies—rather, we are bodies.

—Andrea Bieler and Luise Schottroff, *The Eucharist*

Embodied

Was ist das? What is this? Luther affirmed that when we ask this question of Holy Communion, the answer is simple: it is Jesus, true Jesus. Not cognitively remembering Jesus, not pretending to be with Jesus, not magically Jesus, but Jesus with us. The specifics of “how” were not Luther’s concern, as he could embrace mystery. We, on the other hand, have spent countless words and hours debating how Jesus can be truly present.

In such questioning, we might be led to ask about creation: How does God create touchable, edible things, and why are they good? Or we are led to incarnation: How is Jesus truly human and truly God, and why believe in this Embodied One?

Debates will go on. We are thoughtful creatures and such questioning does not distance us from God. Yet we also are bodies: bodies that feel, touch, see, smell, eat, and love. When we come to the table, we are intimately connected with God; we do not just have thoughts about God, we taste God. We don’t aspire to reach God, but God is poured out, dribbles down our chins. This is very strange, yet by faith, we are assured that this is true.

Prayer

O God, awaken our bodies to your dwelling within us and with all creation. Amen.