
See, I Am Making All Things New

A sermon by the Rev. Canon Lauren Holder
The Fifth Sunday of Easter – Year C
On the day of recognition of the Holy Eucharist Instruction Class

Did anyone else listen to today's lesson from Revelation and think: Amen—come Lord Jesus! It's a reading we often hear at funerals, which in our tradition are Easter liturgies of resurrection and hope. "See, I am making all things new." With the news being what it has been around the world and in our own backyard, I am longing for God to dwell with us and wipe away our tears. I am longing for a time when death and mourning and crying and pain will be no more. I am longing for Jesus to make all things new in me and in the world around me. Amen—come Lord Jesus!

Come and be with us. Come and be near us. Come and be *present*.

Today we recognize our young people who have been preparing to receive the Holy Eucharist with a deeper understanding of the mystery of Jesus' *presence* among us. Of course, the Eucharist is available to anyone at any age in this place—because we believe that the Real Presence of Jesus is in and among the bread and the wine that we receive, and we believe that Jesus makes himself accessible to all people again and again in our scripture and tradition. Jesus wants to be present with us, so at this altar, Jesus is available to all. And yet we recognize that there is something very special about embracing this mystery in a new way, having studied alongside our young peers, paying attention to the words of the Eucharistic Prayer, asking questions, listening to one another's stories and thoughts about Jesus. So for our young friends who are receiving the Holy Eucharist today—whether it is for the first time or the 100th time—know that God is doing something new in you. And for our older friends! Good news! God is doing something new in you too.

Together we are about to make the presence of Jesus real in this bread and this wine—we are about to receive the body of Christ, and become the body of Christ. And even though we may understand this sacrament a little better this week than the weeks before, we still get to be in awe of the mystery that we receive and become the body of Christ.

But what about on the days when we're not in church and we're not coming to the altar to receive Jesus in this special way? What about tomorrow when we're back at school or work or home or play? What about when we have big feelings about what's going on at school or work or home or far away? Where is Jesus then?

Take a look at our gospel story today. Jesus is with his friends, eating and talking and teaching. His friend Judas has just left the table and is preparing to betray Jesus. His friend Peter is about to deny they are friends at all. And right there in the middle of these heartaches, Jesus says this to the friends around him: By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Friends—this is how we make Jesus' presence real in any given moment. No matter where we are or who we are with or if we are all alone—Jesus is real and present when we love one another.

Now some kinds of love can be pretty easy. And some kinds of love can be pretty hard. Jesus was really good at all kinds of love, so we have lots of good examples. And the example that we pay special attention to in the Easter season is that of Jesus' death and resurrection. It's an example of how Jesus willingly gave up some of his power to ensure everyone would have access to a new heaven and a new earth—to eternal life and eternal love—to the Real Presence of God in the here and now.

So friends, as you come forward today to receive the mystery of Christ's Real Presence in this bread and this wine, consider how you might make Christ's presence real in the world around us. Because I am convinced that God is making things new—even and especially in the face of suffering and sin. God is making all things new. And God needs you and your love to make that new thing real.

And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love. Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.

Amen.

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