

THE PROMISE



It was the custom in the past for saints to practise what they called spiritual communion
- communion through desire.

I attempt to do the same.
I imagine the scene of the Last Supper...
as if I am present there myself.

I observe Jesus as he takes bread in his hands, blesses and distributes it.
When I receive it from his hands
I think what I want this bread to be for me...

Then Jesus speaks with us, his disciples.
His words are an essential part of the eating of the bread,
so I listen carefully:

He first gives us a new command
- to love one another as he has loved us.
I pray that this bread will increase my capacity to love...
and I think what love has come to mean for me
and what place I give it in my life...

If we eat this bread, this body which is broken,
we shall necessarily share in the passion and death of Jesus.
I hear him prophecy that we will be persecuted, even by our own...
So I pray for the courage that sustained the martyrs
and the strength to live and speak as he did....

He makes a gift at this holy meal; Peace.
Not the peace of the world, he says, but his peace.
I ponder on the meaning of those words...
and I ask for that gift for me and for those I love.

Then he makes us a promise.
We will be in pain, he says,
and the world will rejoice,
“but I shall come back to you
and your hearts will be filled with joy
and no one will be able to take that joy from you.”
I pray that through this bread that I have eaten I shall forever experience the joy-giving presence of the Risen Lord in all the ups and downs of life...
I image the scenes of the future where I shall need this presence
and I trust he will be there.

He then begins to pray for us.
I listen and I make his prayer my own.
He prays that we will all be one as he and his Father are one,
that this will be the sign
by which the world will know that he has come from God...
I pray that this bread will be a force for unity in every group where it is eaten.

Jesus speaks long and late into the night.
Supper is finally over.
Now he takes a cup of wine.
I listen to the words he utters over it...

The cup is passed from hand to hand
and when it is my turn to drink
I pray that I shall be intoxicated and lose myself in love....

As I finish my meditation I talk to Jesus in my own words about my own concerns.

From Wellsprings by Anthony de Mello