

Grand Prelate Reflection
September 2018

Sir Knights;

In the Communion service that most see in their churches, after breaking bread, Jesus takes a cup of wine. He then instructs the disciples to drink in remembrance of him. The Lord's Supper is an integral part of what it means to be a Christian. Both the Eucharist and Baptism are considered "sacraments" in many denominations. There are many interpretations as to what the word sacrament means. For me, the simplest one is that those are special times when we know that the presence of God is particularly near. Some faith groups believe that there are other sacraments. Others hold that God is always present. So, in their view, they do not need to hold up particular events as special. Whatever your view, communion is at the heart of our Christian beliefs.

This month, we would like to focus on the "cup". The Grand Commander has made it his theme this year. In many denominations, there is one cup. This cup is shared by all people in the church. Some find this awkward. They think that drinking from the same cup might cause them to be sick. The vast majority of Christians celebrate communion in this manner. Though it is possible to get sick from germs that are spread by drinking from the cup, rarely does it happen. Perhaps the reason that folk do not get sick is faith. We share the same cup and share the same belief in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That is a bond that we all share. It is also one worth focusing on.

When we share from the same cup, we acknowledge that we are all equal. No one is better than anyone else. We might have all the possessions in the world. But, when we kneel at the altar, we are the same as the person next to us. Perhaps you have heard the story of a church in Richmond. Just after the Civil War ended, communion was about to be served. A former slave stood up and walked to the altar in order to receive communion. The minister was unsure how to proceed. The congregation was white and did not wish to share communion with the former slave. Finally, an elderly gentleman stood and walked to the altar. He knelt beside the former slave and nodded to the minister. The minister proceeded to administer communion. With that, the rest of the congregation came forward. The elderly man was Robert E. Lee.

There are times when we might feel that we are better than others. We might believe that some act we have done or some award we have received might raise us above other people. There is also the other end of the spectrum when we might not believe that we are as good as other people. We might not have the greatest amount of money or the finest in clothing. It is at those times that we need to remember the cup. The cup reminds us that we are no better or worse than the person next to us. We are all the same in the eyes of God.

As Knights Templar, perhaps that is the lesson to be gleaned from the cup. We are here to serve God. We come from all walks of life. Some have better life situations than others. But, it is our faith that makes us one. It is our faith that binds us together. In coming to a better understanding of that, we might better serve those around us. In doing so, we are truly answering the cup and living our lives in remembrance of Jesus.

Until next month, may God's Peace and Love be always with you.

Mark Pennypacker
Grand Prelate