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Holy Eucharist: Table of Reconciliation

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KEY VERSE

“So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23–24)

READINGS

Psalm 85; Epistle 1 Cor. 10:14-22; Gospel Matt. 5:23-26

The Holy Eucharist is one of the greatest gifts Christ has given to His Church. Every time believers gather around the Lord’s Table, they remember the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ, proclaim His death until He comes again, and experience the fellowship of His Body. The Eucharist is not merely a religious ritual or weekly tradition; it is a sacred encounter with the living Christ. It nourishes our faith, strengthens our hope, deepens our communion with God, and unites believers with one another.Yet the Scriptures remind us that the Lord’s Table is not simply a table of remembrance; it is also a Table of Reconciliation. Before we receive the bread and the cup, God calls us to examine our hearts, renew our relationships, and restore broken fellowship. Reconciliation lies at the heart of the Gospel. God reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and He now calls us to live in reconciliation with one another.Our world today is marked by broken relationships. Families are divided. Friendships are damaged. Communities are polarized. Churches sometimes experience conflict, misunderstanding, and unforgiveness. In such a world, the celebration of the Holy Eucharist becomes a powerful witness that Christ has broken down every dividing wall and created one new family in Him.The appointed readings for today beautifully unfold this truth. In Exodus, God’s covenant is confirmed through sacrifice and a sacred meal. Psalm 85 celebrates God’s forgiving love that brings peace. Paul teaches the Corinthians that participation in the Lord’s Table creates communion with Christ and with one another. Jesus Himself teaches that reconciliation with our neighbour must precede worship at the altar. Together these passages invite us to approach the Holy Eucharist with hearts reconciled to God and to one another.

1. The Holy Eucharist Reminds Us of God’s Covenant of Reconciliation

The first reading from Exodus 24 describes one of the most remarkable covenant ceremonies in the Old Testament. Moses read the Book of the Covenant before the people, and they responded together, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.”The covenant was then sealed with sacrifice. Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar and upon the people, declaring, “This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you.” Afterwards, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders went up the mountain. They beheld the glory of God, and in His presence they ate and drank.This covenant meal foreshadows the Holy Eucharist. Just as the old covenant was confirmed by blood and followed by fellowship with God, the new covenant has been established through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. At the Last Supper, Jesus intentionally echoed the language of Exodus when He said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood.”Every celebration of Holy Communion reminds us that we are a covenant people. We do not come to the Lord’s Table because we are worthy, but because Christ has reconciled us to the Father through His sacrifice on the Cross.The Eucharist therefore is not primarily our invitation to God; it is God’s

gracious invitation to us. He welcomes sinners who have been forgiven, restores those who have repented, and gathers His children into one family. Every communicant approaches the Table on the same basis – grace alone.

2. The Holy Eucharist Calls Us to Reconciliation with One Another

The Gospel reading presents one of the most searching teachings of Jesus.”If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there… first be reconciled.”These words are astonishing. Jesus places reconciliation above religious ritual. Worship that ignores broken relationships is incomplete.Notice that Jesus does not say, “If you have something against your brother.” Instead, He says, “If your brother or sister has something against you.” The responsibility for reconciliation belongs to the disciple of Christ. We are called to take the first step.The Holy Eucharist reminds us that we cannot sincerely receive the peace of Christ while refusing to extend that peace to others.This does not mean every relationship will be perfectly restored. Some situations involve deep wounds, abuse, or circumstances beyond our control. Yet wherever possible, believers are called to pursue forgiveness, humility, and peace.The early Church understood this truth deeply. Before sharing the Lord’s Supper, believers exchanged the Peace, declaring their willingness to forgive and to live as one Body.Reconciliation requires courage. Pride often tells us to wait for others to apologize first. The Gospel calls us instead to imitate Christ, who took the initiative to reconcile the world to Himself.Every time we approach the altar, we should ask ourselves:

Is there bitterness I need to surrender?

Is there someone I need to forgive?

Is there someone from whom I should seek forgiveness?

Am I living in peace with the Body of Christ?

The Table of the Lord is a place where enemies become brothers and sisters because Christ has made peace through His Cross.

3. The Holy Eucharist Unites Us as One Body in Christ

Paul addresses the Corinthian Church because divisions had begun to weaken their fellowship.He writes,”The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?”Paul teaches that Holy Communion is more than a symbol. It is a participation in the life of Christ. As we share one bread and one cup, we proclaim that we belong to one Lord and one Body.This truth has profound implications.We cannot share one loaf while living in hatred toward members of Christ’s Body.We cannot confess unity in worship while nurturing division outside the sanctuary.The Eucharist destroys barriers of race, language, caste, culture, nationality, wealth, and social status. Around the Lord’s Table there are no superior or inferior believers. We stand equally redeemed by the blood of Christ.Paul also warns believers against divided loyalties. One cannot participate in the Table of the Lord while giving allegiance to idols. The Eucharist calls us to wholehearted devotion.In today’s world, idols may not always be carved images. They may be wealth, power, success, materialism, pride, self-interest, or anything that takes the place of God.The Lord’s Table continually calls us back to exclusive loyalty to Jesus

Christ.As members of one Body, we are invited to encourage one another, bear one another's burdens, pray for one another, and demonstrate genuine Christian fellowship. Communion is not an individual act alone; it is the celebration of God's united family.

4. The Holy Eucharist Sends Us into the World as Ambassadors of Reconciliation

Psalm 85 beautifully declares,"Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other."This verse captures the heart of the Gospel. At the Cross, God's justice and mercy met perfectly. Through Christ, sinners are forgiven without compromising God's holiness.Every Eucharistic celebration ends with a dismissal. We are not sent away merely because the service has ended. We are sent into the world with a mission.Having received reconciliation from God, we become ambassadors of reconciliation in society.The Table shapes our daily lives.Those who receive the Bread of Life should feed the hungry.Those who receive God's forgiveness should forgive others.Those who experience Christ's peace should become peacemakers.Those who receive God's love should extend that love to the lonely, the suffering, and the marginalized.The Eucharist therefore continues long after the service ends. It is lived out in homes, workplaces, schools, neighbourhoods, and communities.When Christian families choose forgiveness over resentment, the Eucharist bears fruit.When churches overcome division through humility and love, the Eucharist bears fruit.When believers work for justice, peace, and compassion, the Eucharist bears fruit.The Lord's Table is not the end of Christian worship; it is the beginning of Christian witness.Every Communion service renews our calling to become visible signs of Christ's reconciling love in a fractured world.

Conclusion

The Scriptures today remind us that the Holy Eucharist is far more than a sacred ceremony. It is God's covenant meal, Christ's Table of grace, and the Church's celebration of reconciliation.Exodus reminds us that God's covenant is established through sacrificial blood and joyful fellowship.Psalm 85 proclaims the beautiful meeting of mercy and truth, righteousness and peace.Paul teaches that sharing the bread and the cup unites us with Christ and with one another.Jesus calls us to seek reconciliation before approaching the altar, because true worship flows from hearts transformed by grace.As we come to the Lord's Table, let us come with gratitude for Christ's sacrifice, humility before God's holiness, repentance for our sins, and a sincere desire to live in peace with others.May every celebration of the Holy Eucharist renew our covenant with God, deepen our fellowship with His Church, heal broken relationships, and strengthen us to become ambassadors of Christ's reconciling love.Then the Table of the Lord will not only nourish our souls within the Church but also transform our lives beyond its walls, so that the world may see in us the reconciling love of Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us and calls us to live as one Body until He comes again.

Amen.