

Midweek Advent 2  
1 Corinthians 11:23-29  
*'All I want for Christmas is Lord's Supper'*

**In the Name of Jesus! AMEN!**

What are you most looking forward to this Christmas?

Is it the presents? There are bound to be a few with your name on them. They will come from friends and family, and some may even come from strangers in one gift exchange or another. There will be things you wanted, and there will be things you probably never expected.

Perhaps you are looking forward to time with family. In a hustle and bustle world, where no one has time to sit down and think, there is a magical period of the 1 week between Christmas and New Year's where most people have at least a few days off and everything is closed, so you all have to stay put and enjoy each other's company. Family is one of the things that makes the holidays so special.

And there are other things as well that you may look forward to: the decorations around the neighborhood; the singing of familiar carols; the annual airing of certain Christmas movies; and of course, hearing the familiar Christmas stories, most especially the ultimate Christmas story of our Savior's birth in St. Luke 2.

Of course some things are more anticipated than others; perhaps shopping for presents is not your thing; or maybe you do not like to sing; or perhaps the idea of time with family is not quite so appealing.

But no matter what you do not look forward to, there is one thing that everyone looks forward to during this month of December: the food.

Yes, there are just certain foods that are seen only during the month of December that therefore require you to eat as much of it as you can, as it will be a whole year before you can do so again.

What foods do you look forward to this time of year? Is it the ever popular candy cane? Or maybe the Hickory Farms stands in many malls. Christmas cookies are always a treat; as are gingerbread houses. It is safe to say that Christmas comes with its own distinct food group of meats and cheeses and pastries.

But what happens to all of that food?

Well, you eat it of course. But then what?

On or about January 1<sup>st</sup>, the Hickory Farms stands in the mall close up shop. By January 3<sup>rd</sup>, the last of the cookies are eaten. And on January 6<sup>th</sup>, the last of the candy canes are thrown away.

And what do you have left?

A few extra pounds on the scale? That may be the only lasting remnant of those Christmas treats. For as much as you savored them, they do not last forever. In fact, they barely last past New Year's; and that is to say nothing of how long they are actually in your stomach. And no matter what you eat this month, by January 10<sup>th</sup>, you will be on to other foods, after all, Valentine's Day candy will soon populate the shelves.

If only there were a food that provided something more; a food that fed you for more than a few days; a food that had a more lasting impact than a few more pounds on the scale.

You will not find such a meal in any of the old time recipes that you may search through. But you will find one such meal here, in the Church.

Yes, not only during this time of Christmas, but throughout the whole year, the Church provides a meal that does more than just leave you wanting more. The Church offers to you the very body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in, with and under the elements of bread and wine.

How can this be? you may ask. After all, when you kneel before the altar, all you receive is a wafer no bigger than a quarter, and barely enough wine to warrant a swallow.

Ah yes, but this meal is a far different meal than the one that will sit upon your kitchen table. The meal offered at our Lord's table is not a meal that will make your stomach wish you had stopped eating after the second helping; rather it is a meal that will fill you with the real presence of Jesus coursing through your system, so that you might say to the devil – I am filled with my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you can do me no harm.

For that is the true power of this meal. This meal that is set before you on the altar, is a meal that will give you strength as you face the enemies of sin, death and the power of the devil. What greater assurance can you have, than to know that you do not face the temptation to spend more than you have, or to eat and drink more than you should, or to reject the opportunities to pray, praise and give thanks, than to know that you have Jesus literally coursing through your veins.

You do not face the devil alone; you do not face sin alone, you do not face trial and temptation alone. You are filled with the body and blood of Jesus, giving you the full and certain assurance that your sins are forgiven; and not only that, but that you have a place reserved for you in Paradise. The eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood is not some ancient Church ritual; it is a constant reminder and seal of the promise that you carry with you each and every day.

For each time you eat and drink the body and blood of Christ, you do so in full knowledge and remembrance of His coming in human flesh in the Bethlehem manger, of His perfect life on earth, of His innocent suffering and death, and of His most glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven. And when you receive the body and blood of Christ, you hear the promise spoken again that He is with you now, and that He has prepared a place for you in eternity.

Christmas cookies and lutefisk do not offer that; only the real presence of Jesus offered to you here at the Lord's altar does that.

Such a small gift never offered so much to those who receive it; and yet this gift that the Church gives to you under the authority of Christ does so.

Receive this gift with joy and gladness, for your Father in heaven has prepared it for all to feast upon, here and in eternity.

**In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit! AMEN!**