

Thoughts on the Daily Word

4th Week of Year. Thursday 6th February. Readings of Day: Hebrews 12:18-19,21-24; Psalm: 47; Gospel: Mark 6:7-13.

The Eucharist has always been the centre of my life. It was there as a small child when our old school was also the church. In my teens our social life revolved around the parish choir with Sunday Mass and twice weekly Benediction at its centre. God then at 17 called me to love the daily Mass. Then almost every turning point of my spiritual life flowed from an experience of the Eucharist. An important point for me was a retreat given to our trainee deacons by a theologian, originally from Newcastle, working in Rome at the time. Fr. Paul McPartlan wrote a book and gave us a talk on the Eucharist which focused on this passage of the Letter to the Hebrews. To him this was a message about the experience of the Eucharist. The movement from the frightening revelation to Moses, to the wonderful experience of the festival, 'what you have come to'. To him this meant the Eucharist in which together we are the 'first-born'. We are meant to imagine ourselves, wherever we are, in the presence of the heavenly Jerusalem. We are the Holy City, even in our broken-down churches, in the midst of persecution, or even when we are alone. Something that sadly happens a lot now as we priests have to celebrate Mass for everyone, alone.