

Reflection Thursday 3rd Week Easter 2024

In the gospel, Jesus makes the striking statement, *'Everybody who believes in me has eternal life'*. He does not say, 'will have eternal life', but '**HAS eternal life**'. We normally think of eternal life as beginning after death, after our earthly life is completed. The gospel, however, suggests that eternal life is somehow accessible to us *here and now*, during this earthly life.

Eternal life in the gospel of John is understood as a life of communion with Jesus, the source of true life. Such a life of communion with the Lord can be experienced here and now by all those who believe in him. In so far as we are in communion with each other, we will be in communion with the Lord. Hands joined together, united around the cross, united around the Resurrection.

We traditionally use the term 'holy communion' to refer to the Eucharist. We recognize that in and through the Eucharist we enter into communion with the Lord and with each other, in a special way. Because it is a time of communion with the Lord, the church has always understood the Eucharist as the anticipation of eternal life. When we receive Jesus in communion, heaven comes to earth and eternal life bursts open into this earthly life.

What wonder!