

## Jubilee Daytime Prayer

May 25, 2008

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (2: 42, 45-46)

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and communal life,  
to the breaking of the bread and the prayers.*

*Day by day as they spent much time together in the temple,  
they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts,  
praising God and having the good will of all the people.*

What a wonderful reading for this feast and for our Jubilee! It speaks of what is at the heart of the Early Christian community, of religious life, of Dominican charism more specifically, and certainly at the heart of the commitment our jubilarians made many years ago.

Like the early Christians, our sister jubilarians have also “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and communal life, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers.” The dictionary defines “Devote” as “to give or apply (attention, time or oneself) completely to some activity, purpose, etc. It comes from the Latin “*de*—completely + *vovere*—to vow.” Is this not what we celebrate, that our sisters have given themselves fully, wholeheartedly to their purpose in life? And we celebrate God’s faithful love to them expressed through the congregation, their family, friends, and partners in ministry, all those with whom they have broken bread and shared life.

The reading for the feast presents an idyllic life; perhaps when we first entered religious life or made our life commitment, we thought it would be ideal. However, even with the early Christians there are many other places in the epistles where we get another version of what it was like! Quarrels and factions, exclusivity and selfishness; No committed lifestyle, no shared life is without its challenges. Along with the joys and high points of these past years for our jubilarians, surely there have also been bumps and obstacles, hurts and disappointments along the way. (Our closing prayer this morning expressed this so well!) They have needed to forgive and be forgiven, but is this not what makes the commitment and the devotion take flesh? Anyone can strive and succeed in the best of times, but what about the worst of times, when I dread facing

another day or a sister in my community or going to my ministry site or when I am disappointed in myself and my own weakness and inability to live the life as I wish I could. That is when the willingness to keep devoting oneself over and over again, day by day, finds its meaning. None of us lives out our commitments perfectly, but God is faithful and keeps enabling us to go deeper and deeper into the meaning of what we first vowed. Our fidelity is always imperfect but all that we have to offer to our God who lovingly accepts it. Jubilees and anniversaries are opportunities for all of us to rekindle the flame of devotion, to look again at what and to whom we have pledged our lives.

So does this feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, for it reminds us that our fidelity, our devotion is based on our being in relationship with Christ, “to the breaking of the bread and the prayers.” Not only is it an invitation to intimacy with him, but it is also a call to **be** bread for one another. “They broke bread *at home*.” This probably refers to the home churches of the early Christians, but today it also refers to our shared life, to our **being** bread broken for others, first of all our sisters and for those others whom God sends us to experience our love. “They broke bread at home and *ate their food* with glad and generous hearts.” That’s an interesting wording, “ate their food.” What is this food? The Eucharist, of course, the Word of God, the encouragement of a sister, the support of community; all that nourishes the spirit as well as the body. We are called to be grateful...for what is provided...and generous...with what we have: ourselves first of all—our time, our gifts, our presence, our very lives.

Like Christ we are meant to be blessed, broken and shared, to **be** Eucharist in our world today. We thank you, jubilarians, for your faithful witness to this truth. We praise God for you and you have our “good will.” May our God awaken in each of us our devotion to our call in life. May the apostles’ teaching be evident in us, may we share our lives with those around us, and thus may **we be** the Body and Blood of Christ, today and day by day!