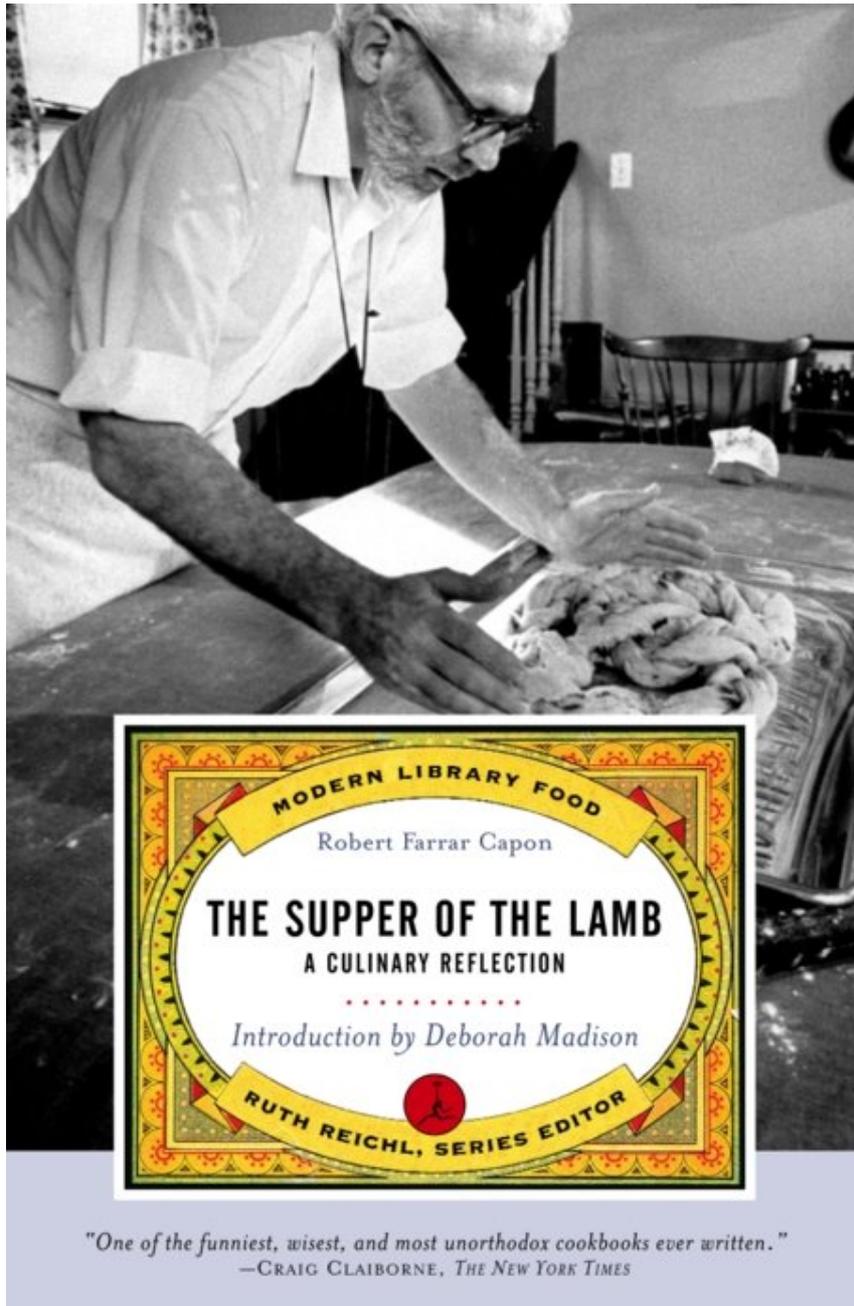


Sermon

'The Supper of the Lamb'

Year B 2018 Pentecost 12



My son Daniel loves football. And so one evening recently I took him to Elsternwick Park, for some kick to kick. Being the middle of winter, it was still dark. The lighting for the new stadium there is magnificent. And so we were drawn, like moths to the light, to play football. Watching Daniel enjoying himself that evening, it was like Christmas in July for him. With the stadium virtually to ourselves, I too reveled in the joy of playing with my beautiful son. It was a taste of Christmas joy, for me as well.

As we were playing there, something happened. Suddenly, everything around me was transformed. The world, at least it seemed to me, fell silent. The whole landscape, stood still. Everything that was there before - the football stadium, the football oval, the magnificent lighting, just seemed, to fall away, to fade away, into the darkness of the night around us. Into the darkness, that lay beyond the stadium lights. Into the overwhelming brightness of the night. The silent presence, the still presence, the holy mystery, of God himself. The ground of being. Whose merciful love, upholds this world, in life.

It like scales falling away from my eyes. As I came to everything, the world around me, the world within me, in its proper light. The proper light, of the love of God. The proper light, of God himself. And in that moment, in the loving embrace, of God, I felt, in the deepest possible place within me, a profound sense, of being reconciled to God. One with God. Safe from all harm. At home, and free.

‘I am the living bread that came down from heaven...and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh’ Jesus says.

By his death we have been set free. Free from the powers of the world. Free from the dazzling lights, from the confusion of autonomy over and against God. Free, at last. And reconciled to God.

Jesus is the bread of life. In the Eucharist, the Lord’s Supper, Holy Communion, Jesus is with us, in glorious, resurrection life. And with him, the saving event of His Passion, for the reconciliation of the world. Each time we celebrate the Eucharist, Jesus is with us. God with us. And with him, all of his benefits. In him, our deepest need is met. In him, our separation from God, is overcome. In him, we are found, at home – at peace – with God. Reconciled, we are made one, with God. This is not something we can do on our own. This is not something we can achieve for ourselves. It is pure gift. The gift of God. The gift, of love.

Says German theologian Jurgen Moltmann, ‘There is eternal life before death: we do not experience it in terms of its length, as a life without end. We experience it in terms of its depth. Every truly and wholly lived moment, is the presence of eternity.’ This is especially true as we celebrate the Eucharist. In the words of American Episcopal priest and gourmand Robert Farrar Capon,

‘With that, I leave you. From this point on, a well-made dinner party is on its own. With only minor nudging from time to time to prevent its running aground in the shoal waters of disagreement or bad taste, it should come, with flags flying and bands playing, to a happy berth. I wish you well. May your table be graced with lovely women and good men. May you drink well enough to drown the envy of youth in the satisfactions of maturity. May your men wear their weight with pride, secure in the knowledge that they have at last become considerable. May they rejoice that they will never again be taken for callow, black-haired boys. And your women? Ah! Women are like cheese strudels. When first baked they are crisp and fresh on the outside, but the filling is unsettled and indigestible; in age, the crust may not be so lovely, but the filling comes at last into its own. May you relish them indeed. May we all sit long enough for reserve to give way to ribaldry and for gallantry to grow upon us. May there be singing at our table before the night is done, and old, broad jokes to fling at the stars and tell them we are men...

Come then; leap upon these mountains, skip upon these hills and heights of earth. The road to Heaven does not run *from* the world, but *through* it. The longest Session of all is no discontinuation of these sessions here, but a lifting of them all by priestly love. It is a place for *men and women*, not ghosts—for the risen gorgeousness of the New Earth and for the glorious earthiness of the True Jerusalem.

Eat well then. Between our love and His Priesthood, He makes all things new. Our Last Home will be home indeed.'