



Parent Pages

Preparing the environment of the Domestic Church*

* The term "Domestic Church" refers to the family, the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. Though recovered only recently, the term dates back to the first century AD. The Greek word *ecclesiola* referred to "little church." The early Church understood that the home was fertile ground for discipleship, sanctification, and holiness.

The Eucharist

While we are blessed with abundant access to God's Word even in this time of fasting from the table of the body of Christ, it is clear that union with Jesus includes participating in the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy. How in this moment, then, can we continue to be instructed and nourished, living in an ever-deepening communion with him?

Remembering and Memorial

The celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy is known as a Memorial. The history of this word takes us back to the Old Testament and the working of God with his people from the beginning of creation. This relationship, or covenant, between God and his people has always been marked by a liturgical ritual from building an altar to circumcision, to the yearly Passover meal set as a perpetual memorial. Each time the ritual is celebrated there is a "re-engagement" of the covenant. Yes, that original moment is remembered, but, even more, it is also made new in this moment of today. This type of remembering is very powerful and forms the heart of how the People of God have always lived out their relationship with God.

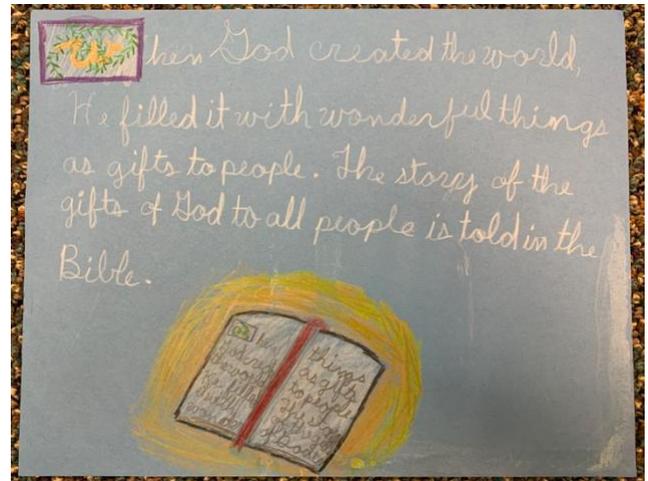


In the New Testament Jesus takes this deeply significant act of remembering and places new words into the ritual Passover meal. Here he gives the apostles a new way of living an even deeper covenant relationship with God. Jesus announcing that the bread and wine have become his Body and Blood, the whole of himself, and are offered as gift. This anticipates the physical reality of what will happen the next day. "Calvary will add the visible dimension of the action of self-offering that had been already completed in Jesus" (*The History of the Kingdom of God: Liturgy and the Building of the Kingdom*, p. 75). Then Jesus says to the apostles, and to those who will come after them, that they are to "Do this in memory of me."

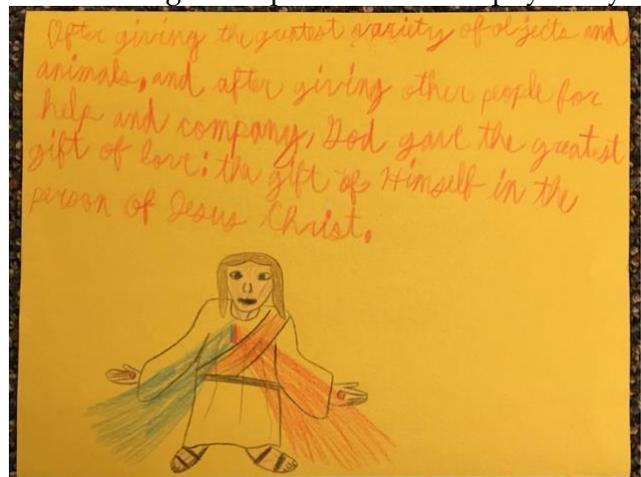
In this moment in history when we are unable to be physically present to the powerful act of Memorial which is the Mass, how can we unite ourselves to this great covenantal celebration? What is the “this” that Jesus is inviting us to do? Is there a way of living a life of self-gift, of offering oneself for others, of living as he did? We know this is a liturgical command, but could it also have a moral dimension?

The Function of the Liturgy

“There has always been a plan in God’s mind, one leading all persons and all creation to fullness” (*The History of the Kingdom of God: Liturgy and the Building of the Kingdom*, p. 1). This plan of God encompasses all that exists, all that has existed, and all that will exist. Humans were entrusted with creation in order to enjoy it, to care for it and transform it in order that it might approach that fullness for which it was created. Through this process, grapes become wine and wheat becomes bread. Humans, through his work, is able to help these elements of creation reach a new level of completion. But there is a further fullness for which wine and bread, wood and stone, beeswax and linen were created. When they are used in the worship of God through Liturgy, they are truly transformed. A altar, covered with a linen cloth, flanked by candles, holding bread and wine, allows for a new level of completion. “In the worship of God, we bring our whole lives with us, even that activity in which we use and enjoy the goods of this world. In worship we also bring elements of the lower level of nature with us that are transformed by the work of our hands and mind...And in worship, the human creature, through Christ, consecrates the whole universe to God” (*The History of the Kingdom of God: Liturgy and the Building of the Kingdom*, p. 4).



Even in this moment when we are not physically present at the Celebration of the Eucharist we can unite all of our daily work of transforming creation to the offering of the priest. While not physically present, we can still be spiritually present. The extra cooking, cleaning, and dishes of this moment in time can be placed in the hands of the priest as well as the patience required when trying to accomplish tasks for our jobs while also living in the midst of children who are in need of help with online learning, chores, and other activities. The anxiety of financial stress, concerns about the health of loved ones, and future uncertainties can be united with the struggles Jesus faced in His life and those He witnessed in those around Him.

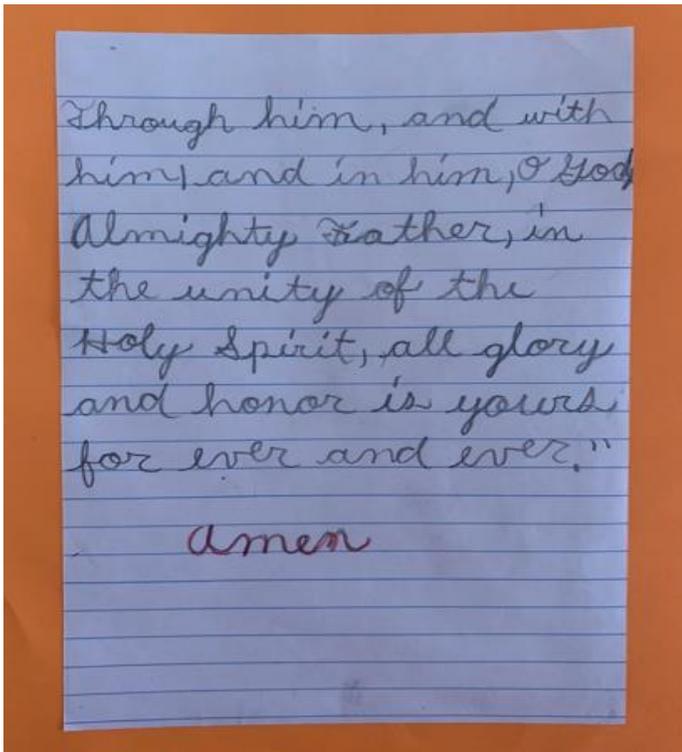




Living the Eucharist

What "gifts" can you prepare to place on the altar next Sunday? Perhaps you would like to take time this week to invite your children to join you in writing or drawing what you are offering to God as the priest offers Him the bread and wine, "the work of human hands."

- To prepare for this, you could gather together each evening to think through the gifts of the day.
- List them out loud as a litany of praise to God or take time in silence to recall them or write them out.
- For children over the age of six you could then take time to ponder how you have received or responded to those gifts.
- Perhaps there is a way you would like to live differently tomorrow.
- Choose one concrete way you could live more as Jesus did. Maybe it's making your bed without being asked or going last when you play a game together. Perhaps you will take an extra five minutes of silence or you will begin your day with a smile.
- Maybe one of these decisions will be the gift you will place on the prayer table next Sunday as a sign of how you are uniting yourself to the bread and wine offered by the priest at Mass.



Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. May we, too, be transformed through, with, and in him.