

**Eucharist is about...**

**Thanksgiving**

**Sharing Life**

**Giving Love**

# Eucharist is about Thanksgiving

The word Eucharist means “to give thanks.” When we celebrate Eucharist, we gather as a thankful people, thankful for the gift of a loving God who enters our lives in ordinary times. Jesus said, “I am with you always.” He knew we needed a way to truly know his presence, so he chose the sharing of a meal – bread and wine – to keep that promise to us. We say “Amen” and thank you! The following are some simple ways to build an attitude of thankfulness in our everyday lives.

-  Write a thank you note to someone special in your life to tell them why they are special to you.
-  On a bulletin board or refrigerator, place a sign: “Today we are thankful for \_\_\_\_\_.” At the end of the day, each family member places a sticky note naming something about the day for which is grateful.
-  Place notes of affirmation under each family member’s pillow.
-  Practice saying “thank you” for even small things. Such practice builds an attitude of gratefulness, and avoids the temptation to take advantage of each other. For example: “Thank you for putting your dish in the dishwasher.”
-  At the end of your day, make the sign of the cross on each family member’s head before going to bed. As you bless one another, pray in gratitude for the gift of that person in your life, or for a special act that they did for you that day.
-  During bedtime prayers, try this: Each family member thinks of three happy moments in their day and shares them. Together thank God for these happy moments.

## Eucharist is about Sharing Life

To be most fully human, we are called to share our lives with others. The family is the very first and most intimate experience of sharing life. We often celebrate life by sharing a meal. Sharing food is a sacred action that brings people together. Jesus named this action as sacred when he took bread, blessed and broke it and said “This is my body, given for you ... do this and know I am with you.” The following are some simple ways to build our awareness of how we share life with one another.

-  Share family photos of special gatherings. How many of these gatherings included the sharing of a meal?
-  Invite each person to write on a sticky note the name of a person on whom they depend (one name per sticky note, but as many sticky notes as you wish.) Names might include: the auto-mechanic, bus driver, teachers, doctors, nurses, grocery store employees, relatives, postal carrier... Place these sticky notes on a large poster and remove all duplicate names. When all names are displayed, invite family members to draw lines from their own name to connect with any names from the group on whom they depend. The poster will soon look like a “web,” and will visually illustrate our interdependence. Lift the people on the poster up in prayer – in gratitude and in prayer for their health and wellness.
-  Invite all family members to identify their favorite food and share why that food makes them happy.
-  As a family, write a blessing to share before meals.
-  Have a festive family meal at which all members are present. One person could lead prayer, one could set the table, one could make name cards, a centerpiece, etc.
-  Bake bread from scratch together. As you do, share what you remember about the meals Jesus shared in the Gospels.

## Eucharist is about Giving Love

Remember the phrase, “You are what you eat?” It’s a way of saying that what we put into ourselves makes a difference in the kind of person we are. Jesus, God’s gift of love to us, is the good food that helps us to become the gift of love to others. When Jesus said, “Do this in memory of me,” he was calling us to a loving way of life, modeled after his very own. The following are some simple ways to build on this awareness.

-  Designate a “random acts of kindness” day, where you surprise others with your little acts of kindness done with great love.
-  Find out about organizations, local and national, that are working on behalf of the hungry.
-  Decorate a jar or box that you can add change to contribute to your local food pantry.
-  During Lent: go online to the St. Matthew’s website. Download this week’s parish bulletin. Read the CRS Rice Bowl reflection.
-  Ask Fr. Chris for the name of a person in our parish who is homebound and alone. Pray for this person. Make a card to send her/him. Tell her/him that you will carry her/him in your heart and your prayers.
-  During your mealtime prayer, remember to pray for those who live alone as a way to bring them to your table.
-  Find a breadbasket and put it on your kitchen/dining room table. Label it “Our Daily Bread.” Commit to placing in it your prayer intentions, notes about an act of kindness you either gave or received, or a card or affirmation you received. Plan to read these together.
-  Identify a talent you have, and share it with someone else.