

In many homes the most important piece of furniture is the kitchen table. Here the family gathered for nourishment, advice, guidance, or just simple conversation. It often served as a place where arguments ensued and discipline was meted out. In the evening the kitchen table became a place for doing homework and even later in the night a haven for my mother to read, drink tea and escape as the frenetic family life gave way to sleep or television. Unfortunately, today the command center of the family home is no longer the Kitchen table. It has gotten serious competition from, gameboy, ear buds, cell phones and all sorts of electronic gadgets. It is now the exception rather than the rule for families to gather around the table for meals. Its loss is a real challenge for the modern family to furnish a place in the home where the family can gather to feel welcomed, safe and nourished, both physically and emotionally. The lack of such a place is a very serious threat to the life of the family.

I believe that Jesus' choice; to share His greatest gift with His new family (the disciples), from the table of the Last Supper was quite deliberate in so many ways. From this historic Passover meal flows the sustenance of our Catholic family. The Body and Blood of Christ. This table of the Lord is what brings us here week after week to celebrate our life with Christ.

The Holy Eucharist, the gift of Christ Himself has been passed on from one generation to the next for nearly 2000 years. This great banquet of life here on earth anticipates the great gathering of the family at the heavenly banquet of love where God will gather all His faithful children.

Today we as the People of God gather to consecrate this altar. In a sense it is the kitchen table of the Church. From this sacred altar we are fed the Body and Blood of Christ. This spiritual nourishment sustains us for the daily grind of living in the human condition.

The words of today's Gospel remind us of this central mystery of our faith. "That unless you eat of my flesh and drink of my blood you shall not have life in you, for my flesh is real food and y blood is real drink." Powerful words and difficult, to the point, that many of Jesus followers turned away from Him. Even today, many who call Jesus the Christ cannot accept His real presence in the Eucharist and even those that do are often indifferent to their significance. They casually skip partaking of the Sunday celebration. Others take for granted the gift of Christ's Body and Blood. His real presence no longer moves them to give thanks.

All of us face many challenges in life. Many parents have to work two or even three jobs just to support their family. Too many of our highly educated young adults have no jobs or their work does not pay them enough to establish their own family. Often times the pressure of life, blinds us to the value of frequent participation in the sacrifice of the Mass. This weekly celebration of the Resurrection of Christ at Sunday Mass can serve as an anchor in the storms of life. Receiving the Body and Blood of Christ will not only strengthen our spirit to meet the challenges of the harsh realities of life but it will actually help us to experience real joy in overcoming

the world. Our Savior Jesus Christ surely knew what he was doing in choosing The Passover meal as the instrument of conveying to the faithful of each new generation the invitation to come into communion with Him in the holy Eucharist. At no other event can we be more intimate with our Creator than when we take into ourselves His Body and Blood. It is this intimacy that allows the family of the Church to grow in Communion with God and with each other.

At the Eucharistic sacrifice we recall the Cross-of our Lord. This cruel instrument of death has become for us the Tree of life. Jesus' sacrificial act of love flows from every altar in the world where the Eucharist is celebrated. So today we consecrate this altar, this kitchen table of love so that our Catholic family of today and the families of tomorrow will have a place from where they can partake of the Body and Blood of Christ.

In this Thanksgiving Sacrifice we praise God for the gift of His Son. We thank Him for the gift of our faith in His real presence. At this great memorial of Jesus' sacrifice we are united to the events of Calvary. By remembering we unite ourselves not only to the crucified Savior but to all those who have gone before us in faith. Especially we remember those who passed onto us this gift of belief in Christ Crucified, Christ Risen and the Christ who will come again.

In union with all our departed brothers and sisters it is our prayer and our Hope that one-day we shall see them again at the heavenly banquet. My brothers and

sisters in Christ let us ask God for the Wisdom we need to proclaim AMEN from the depths of our hearts when we approach this altar of Sacrifice. Let us shout out I BELIEVE THAT GOD LOVES ME and that I want the world to know that I love Him in return by loving each other as Christ has loved us.