

# LIVING EUCHARIST INITIATIVE

## “Common Threads” Homily Helps & Intercessions

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – HOMILY

### **First Sunday of Advent: November 30<sup>th</sup> 2008**

As we begin a new year in the life of the Church we are given an opportunity to reevaluate our priorities. The first Sunday of Advent always focuses on the second coming of Christ in glory. At every Eucharistic feast we pray in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ. Are we ready? Are we prepared? What is it that keeps us focused, prepared and ready? It is the Eucharist! In the first reading from the Prophet Isaiah we hear the words: “You are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands”. Our loving Father wants to continually mould us and fashion us into the image of His Son. Through the power of God’s Word, and the presence of the Holy Spirit, this transformation should take place at every Eucharist. The Eucharist moulds us into the image of Christ, leading us to proclaim the words of St. Paul: “It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me”. We are beginning the most hectic time of the year. A lot of pressure is put upon us. Don’t lose sight of the real prize, the everlasting gift! Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREAD” – INTERCESSIONS

### **Prayer of Intercession:**

That through the power of God’s Word, and the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Eucharist will continue to mould us into the image of Jesus. We pray to the Lord.

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### **Second Sunday of Advent: December 7<sup>th</sup> 2008**

We focus on the wild man of the desert, John the Baptist! He calls us to repentance. We begin every celebration of the Eucharist by calling to mind our sins. There is nothing negative about the Penitential Rite of the Mass. It is the continual call to conversion. We do not want any part of our lives to remain untouched by God’s grace, by Christ’s presence. While Advent does not have the same penitential aspect as Lent, it is a season of opportunity. The opportunity to open our lives to the healing presence of Christ, the Word made flesh. The Eucharist is a sacrament of healing and forgiveness: “Lord, only say the word and I will be healed”. John’s call to repentance prepared the Way of the Lord. In the Bishop’s Pastoral Letter ‘Living Eucharist: Gathered, Nourished, Sent’ we are invited to prepare for Mass before leaving home for Church. The Bishop writes (page 7): “People should ask themselves what challenges, sorrows and joys they bring to the Lord this week. Even if one has avoided serious sin, this preparation should include a few moments spent considering our failures, oversights and neglect of others and of the Lord, so that these too can be presented to the Church with a humble request for God’s love, mercy and healing”. May we always recognize that the Eucharist is a Sacrament of forgiveness, mercy and healing.

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### **Prayer of Intercession:**

That the Eucharist will open our minds and hearts to the healing presence of Christ’s love. We pray to the Lord.

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### **Third Sunday of Advent: December 14<sup>th</sup> 2008**

John the Baptist was very much aware of who he was and of his role in preparing the way for the Christ, the Messiah. He always looked beyond himself to the one who must increase in his life while he must decrease. The Eucharist continually challenges us to put Christ at the center of our lives. It intertwines Christ’s life with ours. It invites us to lose our self centeredness so that Christ can truly shine through us. In the Eucharist we encounter Christ in such an intimate way and because we do everyone has the right to encounter Him through us. No one can change a person’s life more than Jesus Christ. This is why John the Baptist said that he was not worthy enough to untie the strap of his sandals. Yet, despite our unworthiness Christ comes to us through word and sacrament. He invites us to be transformed. The first reading from the Prophet Isaiah confirms the mission of those who are transformed at the table of the Lord. They are the words used by Jesus in the Synagogue at Nazareth: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and release to the prisoners”. We leave the table of the Lord to bless this world with mercy and justice. This is our mission, entrusted to us by Christ.

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### **Prayer of Intercession:**

That the Eucharist will continue to confirm us in our mission to bring good news to the poor and to heal the broken hearted. We pray to the Lord.

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### **Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 21<sup>st</sup> 2008**

On the fourth Sunday of Advent we focus on the one who is with child, Mary. She carries no ordinary child but the Savior of the World, the Word made flesh. Mary opened herself to the power of God’s Word and the presence of the Holy Spirit. This is also true for those who gather at the table of the Lord. We open ourselves to the power of God’s Word, to the presence and action of the Holy Spirit. As the Bishop writes in his Pastoral Letter ‘Living Eucharist: Gathered, Nourished, Sent’ (page 10): “The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist form “one single act of worship”. In the Word of God, the Covenant of God’s love is announced – as it was to our Jewish ancestors in faith, to the disciples, and to the members of the very early Church, so now to us in this present moment. In the Eucharist, this new and everlasting covenant is celebrated. All the actions of the Mass are in some way derived from the Word of God. A prime example is the institution narrative in the Eucharistic Prayer (“take and eat...take and drink”). The prayers that the priest proclaims at Mass, the hymns that we sing, many of the actions of priest and people and many of the signs (water, wine, bread, even standing, sitting and kneeling) are in some way derived from scripture, from the Word of the Lord. Christ is always present in the proclamation of the Word – it is a living and effective word”. Mary involved herself fully and consciously in the gift of salvation through her fiat, her ‘yes’ to the message of the angel. Her word became flesh, it became reality. May the Word of God, proclaimed and celebrated at the Eucharist, take root in our hearts and be reflected in our lives. “May it be done unto me according to your word”.

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### **Prayer of Intercession:**

That the Word of God will continue to take root in our hearts and be reflected in our lives. We pray to the Lord.

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### **Feast of the Holy Family: December 28<sup>th</sup> 2008**

At the Eucharist we are one family. While we are all unique, from different cultures and backgrounds, we are one body at the table of the Lord. The Eucharist gathers people of every race, language and way of life to share in the one eternal banquet. In families there can be tensions, difficulties and the need for healing and forgiveness. This is true for our own families, within the family of the Church and the worldwide family. Whenever we come to Mass we are given the grace and opportunity to bring those divisions and tensions to the Lord. We present them to Christ for healing and forgiveness. The Eucharist always leads us to look beyond our own front door to the needs of others, both near and far. It makes us responsible for each other and to each other. We experience the gift of Christ’s salvation at every Mass. How blessed we are! Simeon’s hope was fulfilled in his encounter with the Christ child. Our hopes too are fulfilled in the same child. In St. Paul’s Letter to the Colossians we are given the ingredients to hold a family together: “Put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another. And over all these put on love and let the peace of Christ control your hearts”. These words form the perfect prayer on the feast of the Holy Family.

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### **Prayer of Intercession:**

That the Eucharist will clothe us in compassion, kindness, humility and gentleness. We pray to the Lord.