

LIVING EUCHARIST INITIATIVE

“Common Threads” Homily Helps & Intercessions

January 2009

January 4, 2009 – Epiphany of the Lord

Isaiah 60:1-6 – *Raise you eyes and look about they all gather and come to you*

Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6 – *The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body*

Matthew 2:1-12 – *The visit of the Magi*

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” - HOMILY

Today’s first reading comes from the third part of the book of Isaiah. This section was composed by a group of the prophet’s disciples around the time of the return from Babylon. True to the viewpoint of the Isaian School the prophecy has a strong universalistic character. The prophet sees the restored Jerusalem not only as the center for the ingathering of God’s people but also as a beacon for kings and nations. Historically, the restoration did not live up to the prophet’s exalted vision, but with the coming of the Magi its eventual fulfillment in Christ began. In Jesus all people find the light that the prophet saw shining forth from the holy city.

The feast of the Epiphany celebrates the coming of the Magi, but it also speaks to the first sub theme of our *LIVING EUCHARIST* initiative: Gathered. The Magi were the first among the gentiles to be led to Christ, countless others followed them. We are part of that multitude gathered by God and made part of his holy people. Though we come from many different racial and ethnic groups we are truly one in Christ and today we celebrate that marvelous gift of unity.

The Epiphany observance, like every other celebration of the Liturgy, imposes a moral imperative on those who take part in it. If God has freely joined us to his people we must hold the doors of our assembly open to others. Indeed we are compelled to welcome as brothers and sisters all who are drawn by the light and warmth of our fellowship in Christ. At the end of the celebration we are “Sent” to continue the ingathering. Each of us is commissioned to be a star leading men and women to Christ.

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – INTERCESSIONS

That through our participation in the *LIVING EUCHARIST* initiative our parish may grow in unity and love. We pray to the Lord.

That today’s celebration may give us all a renewed sense of mission and a more fervent desire to bring all men and women together in Christ. We pray to the Lord.

January 11, 2009 – Baptism of the Lord

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7 – *I the Lord have called you for the victory of justice*

Acts of the Apostles 10:34-36 – *I see that God shows no partiality*

Mark 1:7-11 – *The Baptism of Jesus*

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – HOMILY

Every Church building has doors, but the real door to the Church is the sacrament of Baptism. When Jesus was baptized his divine sonship was manifested by the descent of the Holy Spirit and the words of God the Father. When we were baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon us and the Father adopted us as his sons and daughters. This adoption came about in the midst of our incorporation into the Christian community which is why we say Baptism is the door to the Church.

Precisely because we were baptized we are part of that assembly of the Baptized that we call the Church. In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Peter shares an important insight about membership in this assembly. He says, “*In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him.*” This truth should be reflected in the welcoming inclusive nature of our Eucharistic assembly.

The assembly is not an end in itself. In the first reading Isaiah tells us that the vocation of the Christ is to bring justice to the nations. Those who have been joined to him by baptism share in his mission. We have all been called for the victory of justice. In this assembly we are nourished with the Word and the Eucharist and then sent forth to continue the battle till every man and woman on earth enjoys the full measure of their human rights.

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – INTERCESSIONS

That our participation in the *LIVING EUCHARIST* initiative will inspire us to work for social justice and the advancement of all peoples. We pray to the Lord.

That today’s celebration will give us a greater appreciation for our own baptism and a renewed commitment to live as God’s children. We pray to the Lord.

January 18, 2009 – 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19 – *The call of Samuel*

Psalm Response: *Here I am Lord; I come to do your will.*

John 1:35-42 – *The call of the first disciples*

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – HOMILY

The theme of “calling” is prominent in the first reading and the Gospel. God called Samuel, but Samuel did not realize that the Lord was speaking to him. He had to be taught how to open himself to the Lord’s word. Eli told him to respond to the voice he heard by saying, “*Speak Lord your servant is listening.*” The Church teaches us to respond to the voice of God speaking to us in the readings by singing the psalms. The psalm that we sing allows the message of the reading to penetrate the depths of our being where it moves us to say, “*Here I am Lord; I come to do your will.*”

In today’s Gospel passage Jesus calls Andrew, John, and Peter to be his disciples. They did not yet understand his teaching but they were ready to follow him. As they journeyed with him they grew in knowledge and faith till they were ready to share his mission. When we gather to celebrate the Eucharist Jesus leads us on the same faith journey that Andrew, John, and Peter began in today’s gospel.

Our Diocesan Eucharistic initiative is called the *LIVING EUCHARIST*. That title has many layers of meaning. One of the ways in which we can say that the Eucharist is “living” is that it is the current actualization of the things we read about in the scripture. When we celebrate the Eucharist God calls us, gathers us around himself and gives us the spiritual formation we need to be Jesus’ disciples. On our part we need to open our hearts to his message and respond to his call by living lives that give forceful witness to our faith.

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – INTERCESSIONS

That our participation in the *LIVING EUCHARIST* initiative will help us to hear God speaking to us through the scriptures, and empower us to give witness to our faith like the prophets and apostles who went before us. We pray to the Lord.

For those who exercise the ministry of proclaiming and teaching the Word of God, that God will make them effective ministers and worthy models of the message they deliver. We pray to the Lord.

January 25, 2009 – Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul

Acts of the Apostles 22:3-16 – *The story of Paul's conversion*

Mark 16:15-18 – *Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to all creation*

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – HOMILY

St. Paul certainly had the most stunning conversion experience in history. At the beginning of his journey to arrest the Christians of Damascus Paul was convinced that Jesus was a threat to all that he held dear, but when he met the Lord he realized Jesus was the answer to all his questions and the fulfillment of all his longings.

The revelation that led to Paul's conversion was God's free gift, but in accepting it Paul had to change his own life. He had to let go of every thing he once clung to and walk the path that Jesus pointed out for him. Every time we gather to celebrate the Eucharist the Church calls us to conversion. We are asked to review our lives in the light of Jesus' teaching and to realign them with the gospel path. In today's Eucharistic celebration we draw courage and inspiration from Paul's example. In union with our brothers and sisters we admit our past failures and renew our commitment to live as Jesus disciples.

In today's Gospel Jesus gives his disciples this command, “*Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to all creation.*” St. Paul took that admonition seriously and dedicated his entire ministry to the proclamation of the Gospel. He gathered all the peoples on his world into the Church and worked tirelessly to keep them united in faith, hope, and love. At the end of our Eucharistic celebration we are sent out to carry on the same work. Now it is up to us to carry on the process of gathering and sending until all men and women are united in faith and love.

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – INTERCESSIONS

That the *LIVING EUCHARIST* initiative will move all the members of our diocese to heed the Lord's call to conversion and to walk in the light of the Gospel. We pray to the Lord.

That we will all learn to see our own personal call to follow Jesus as a call to mission so that those who have not yet met him can encounter him in us. We pray to the Lord.