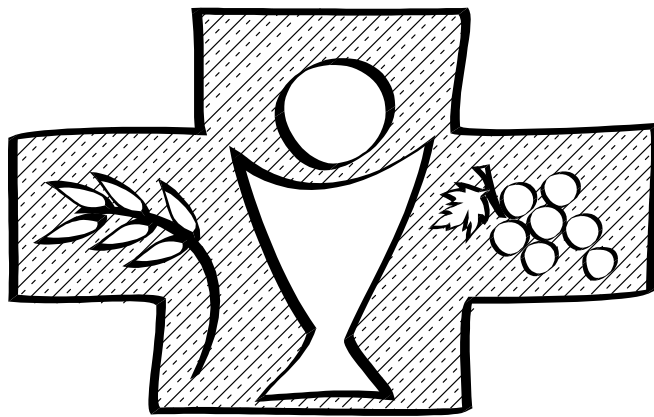


Stay with us,
Lords!



Reflections on the Eucharist

‘A family perspective’

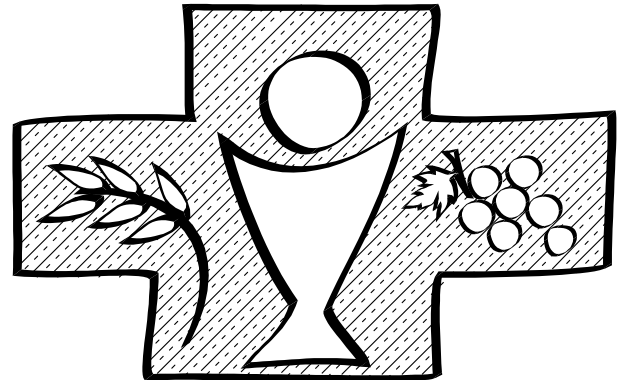
**A Resource from
the Bishops’ Committee
for the Family and for Life**

Stay with us, Lords!

"The Eucharist is a mystery of presence, the perfect fulfilment of Jesus' promise to remain with us until the end of the world." (n.16)

"May all of you, the Christian faithful, rediscover the gift of the Eucharist as light and strength for your daily lives in the world, in the exercise of your respective professions amid so many different situations. Rediscover this above all in order to experience fully the beauty and mission of the family." (n. 30)

John Paul II
Mane Nobiscum Domine
Apostolic Letter 2004



A letter to parish and school personnel

Dear Friends,

Year of the Eucharist

Enclosed is a simple, user-friendly resource for the Year of the Eucharist.

It is a leaflet containing teaching points, practical suggestions, and motivational comments. It could be photocopied and inserted in the parish bulletin or school newsletter. It could be used at any time but would be particularly relevant to the Feast of Corpus Christi.

The leaflet has a deliberate family thrust with suggestions for application in the home. One of the inspiring concepts of the Second Vatican Council was that of the family as the 'domestic church'. Awareness of that will be enhanced by use of this leaflet which was prepared by families for the Bishops Committee for the Family and for Life.

In this Year of the Eucharist we can join our efforts with those of the rest of the Universal Church in deepening our appreciation of this central point of our faith. The leaflet could be used as a supplement to other programmes for the Year of the Eucharist, and reference to two of these is made in the text.

I commend this to you as a practical aid for our homes, our parishes and our schools.

Wishing you every blessing in this joyful Season of Easter,

In Christ,

Bishop Eugene Hurley
Chairman,
Bishops Committee for the Family & for Life



“... leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering.” (Mt5:23)

Want to know more?

A great way to deepen awareness of the eucharist is to form a group with other parishioners, using some of the materials available. Two programmes for the Year of the Eucharist can be accessed via the internet:

www.acbc.catholic.org.au/Year_of_the_Eucharist.html

www.livingwellmedia.com.au

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Much of the material in this leaflet is taken with permission from Year of the Eucharist: A Collection of Resources from The Story Source (2004).

1. Stay with us Lord (Mane Nobiscum Domine) Apostolic letter, Oct 2004.

Eucharist is ...

... responsibility

The Church calls us to approach the Eucharist responsibly: with humility, aware of our need for repentance and reconciliation. A decision not to receive, out of respect for the Eucharist and all it stands for, can be a powerful witness and a way of identifying with the faith of the community.

... hospitality

Make our own homes a Eucharistic oasis of support and encouragement to others on their faith journey through life. Invite a new parishioner to your next family meal. Greet visitors with warmth. Take time to listen and be truly present to those who visit your home. Pray with them.

... mission

Christ died for all people. Personally and as a community, Eucharist is a call to mission. How? By the witness of a daily lifestyle that is different. By openly talking to others about Christ. By practical action, e.g. visiting someone who is sick or lonely, supporting the marginalised or raising money for overseas aid funds.

A Family Prayer

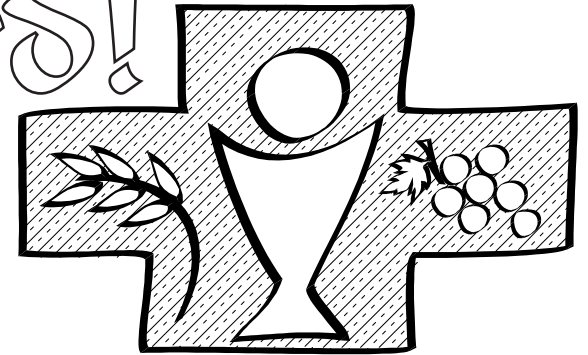
*Jesus, we come before you in gratitude as family. We thank you for the gift and uniqueness of each member of our family. Nourish us so that we may see the gifts you have given us and so encourage the gifts in those around us. **Response: Jesus, nourish us.***

*Jesus, we come before you in sorrow as family. We ask you to forgive the times we have hurt you and each other. **Response: Jesus, forgive us.***

*Jesus, we come before you in need as family. Assist us in our journey with each other. May each of us be a sign of your love by the way we love each other. **Response: Jesus, send us your light.***

*Jesus, we come before you as community. May the example we live out in our homes be a reflection of the love you have for us all – that we may all be one. **Response: Jesus, make us one.***

Stay with us, Lords!



The Pope has nominated this year as a Year of the Eucharist. Why? Basically he longs for us to know Christ more deeply.

In fact, he wrote a letter about this to us entitled ‘Stay with us, Lord.’¹ He points out that we all know we receive Jesus in the Eucharist. However, “we are constantly tempted to reduce the Eucharist to our own dimensions, while in reality it is we who must open ourselves up to the dimensions of the mystery.”

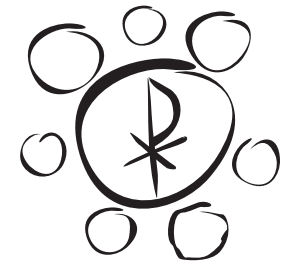
Simply awesome!

And what an awesome mystery it is! God the Son took on human form, walked this earth, died and rose from the dead – all for love of us. What a mystery of intimacy! Jesus so wants to be with us that he left us the Eucharist.

It takes time to grow in understanding of this gift and the Pope invites us to make this year “a high point of a journey in progress.”¹ Why not start working on a ‘eucharistic spirit’ in our homes? The family is the ‘domestic church’, the basic cell of Christian life and we are all part of families and family-like communities.

This leaflet gives some suggestions but there are many other ways of approaching this. The important thing is to get started.

“The Eucharist is nourishment for my soul. It is a time when, more than any other time, I focus in an intimate way on my God. It is especially then that I pray for my family and all the people that I love.”

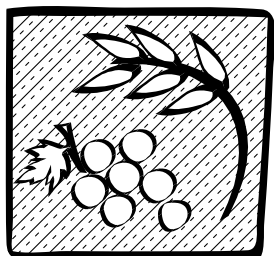


“Sometimes because of other commitments, like the kids being sick, Jeff and I attend different Masses. It makes us realise that something seems to be ‘missing’ when we can’t all go together.”

Christian family life is often described as a journey. As we make our way in the messiness of family life, the eucharist is our spiritual food, sustaining and renewing us as we live the Paschal mystery.

What is one small regular thing that I could start in our home that would bring a more eucharistic spirit into our lives?

"Most days, my father would leave a little love note for my mother around the house where she would find it later – by the kettle or on the computer – nothing fancy, just some words like 'I love you' or 'thinking of you'. She obviously appreciated it and it raised the affection level in our home."



Suggestions

for building
a eucharistic spirit
in the **home**

✚ **Grace before meals**

An important opportunity to stop and remember the blessings we receive from God, especially our food, the gift of one another and the faith we share. We also remember those who hunger for food, love and spiritual hope.

Let's work at making grace before meals part of our family or household routine. If it is already part of your practice, consider how you might bring fresh vitality to your experience of this prayer.

✚ **Family rituals**

These are simple human acts which point to a deeper truth: the sharing of life and faith in the home. Family rituals are a way of passing on our faith. They also help us to understand why the Church has rituals.

What rituals do you have (or could you take up) in your household? e.g. Sunday morning pancakes after Mass; trace the sign of the cross on your child's head as part of your 'good night' routine; pray the rosary on a long car journey; make Christmas gift hampers for families in need.

✚ **Affirmation**

We can release one another from the burden of criticism. Focus on noticing all the good in your family. e.g. Write affirming notes in birthday cards; cut out all negative jokes; smile more often; thank one another 'just because'.

✚ **Simplified lifestyle**

We can support each other in this by pooling ideas for a less materialistic lifestyle. e.g. Cut back your shopping list, give non-material gifts, take inexpensive holidays, give money saved to a relief fund for those in serious need.

Eucharist is ...

... meal – but so much more

We all recognise the difference between a feed and a meal shared with family and friends – same food but a different dimension. The eucharistic meal "expresses the fellowship that God wishes to establish with us and which we ourselves must build with one another."¹

... thanksgiving

The word eucharist means 'thanksgiving'. We celebrate all that God has done for us, all that God calls us to be. From the mundane events of life, to the darkest hour of Calvary, to the joy of resurrection, Jesus has shown us that there is no part of our human experience that cannot be touched, blessed, healed and transformed by Divine Love.

... memorial

We remember Christ's sacrifice, not just as something in the past but as an experience of the power of his death and resurrection touching us now, in the present. Jesus took on human suffering for our salvation. We can take part in that same divine mission by offering our own hurts and sufferings at the altar, in union with him.

... strength of families

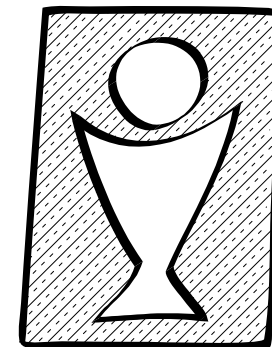
Marriage and family are where we have the greatest potential for intimate committed love and also for deep hurt. Bringing Jesus into the ups and downs of our relationships is a sure way of building the unity and belonging for which we all long.

... source of hope

We proclaim 'Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again'. "While the Eucharist makes present what occurred in the past, it also impels us toward the future, when Christ will come again at the end of history. It fills our Christian journey with hope."¹

"To be with your faith community listening to the Good News gives so much more meaning to our personal faith experiences. The Eucharist is for me the culmination each time of these many and varied experiences."

Who in my family can I thank God for at the Eucharist?



Who in my family can I 'hold up to the Lord' at consecration to bring comfort into his/her life?

"I was often with my mother in her final illness as she received the Eucharist. Our shared faith made her appreciative and gave me hope that she would indeed live forever, having received the 'bread of life'."