



Dear St. Cecilia Parish Family,

8/25/11

“Do This in Memory of Me” is the theme of Catechetical Sunday 2011. The general focus is on faith formation and sacramental practice regarding the Holy Eucharist. The Catholic bishops of the United States **“invite all Catholics to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ in the Church through formation focused on Sacred Scripture and Tradition, and Sacraments, especially the Sunday Eucharist”** (www.usccb.org/priorities/goals.shtml). If we are to experience a greater appreciation of the Eucharist, having a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and restoring Sunday as the Lord’s Day are all essential components of our faith formation. Jesus is central to our Christian faith and life. “At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father” (Pope John Paul II, *Catechesi tradendae*, no. 5)

But how can we have a greater appreciation of the Eucharist, with a love for Jesus Christ, capable of sacrifice, be cultivated in a culture of consumerist self-gratification? How can it flourish in the digital age, which trades wisdom for diversion? How can it survive in the hook-up culture?

The Eucharist makes it possible. God gives himself to satisfy our hunger and thirst for love and meaning. It is *within* the love of God that all human possibility arises. “In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, **but that he loved us** and sent his Son as expiation for our sins” (1 Jn 4:9-10). God the Father’s unconquerable love for us moves him, as it were, to sacrifice his everything, his only-begotten Son, Jesus. In the Eucharist, the Son offers himself to the Father by the power of the Holy Spirit, while he at the same time offers himself to us. After consecration, there he is on the altar. Under the appearance of bread and wine, there is Jesus, and only Jesus—really and truly present—in the mystery of his suffering, death, and resurrection.

Pope Benedict told the youth at World Youth Day last Saturday evening as 1 million youth gathered with him for Eucharistic Adoration: “If you want to grow in faith stay close to the Eucharist.” Parents and Grandparents need to help their children recognize that the family’s actions are not random but are rather incorporated into an eternal and divine plan. Families find their truth in the original domestic church, the Holy Family, offering “all for the Sacred and Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, all through the sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, all in union with Saint Joseph” (www.familyland.org).

The prayer of the family is deepened and fed by catechesis within the family. Parents and Grandparents and even **the entire parish** have not only the option but also the duty to teach their children the faith.

But what if we feel we are not up to the challenge? Maybe we are not sure of what the church teaches or that we may lack knowledge as well. Religious Formation is not just about the youth. It’s about our own Faith formation **and taking advantage of the opportunities offered to adults**. Religious formation is not simply to prepare young people to receive Sacraments. We are all called to build a community of living faith by becoming fully involved. Home life is where faith matures and where active discipleship is “caught.” Parents are the first and most important teachers and living examples of how to follow the Gospel message. Instilling an appreciation of the Eucharist, having a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and restoring Sunday as the Lord’s Day are essential components of faith formation. Together, with catechists, Grandparents, family members and even neighbors, children are taught Catholic morals, values and traditions. Our full, active participation and involvement in our Church are the best examples of positive role modeling, and are the best way to communicate to our children our deep commitment to God, the Eucharist, and to our Catholic Faith.

God’s Peace and Blessings,

Dave Kordell
Director of Religious Formation