

How Holy this Feast

The Eucharist & the Family

Welcome

Opening Response

How holy this feast
in which Christ is our food:
his passion is recalled,
grace fills our hearts,
and we receive a pledge of the glory to come.

Introduction

The family or 'domestic church' is at the heart of our parishes. This means that the daily life of every family embodies within itself the on-going life and worship of the Church. The single person too is connected through their daily life in common with others, including their own family, friends, and wider community. The liturgical actions of adoration are simple; simple human actions focussed on the gift of Christ in the Eucharist. The actions of standing, kneeling and sitting, of watching, gazing and praying, of singing, listening and being silent, above all spending time with another and giving thanks are all reflected in the hundreds of small gestures of a daily life turned out towards others. We are all called to live eucharistic lives that model unconditional love and self-sacrifice.

Listen to Scripture

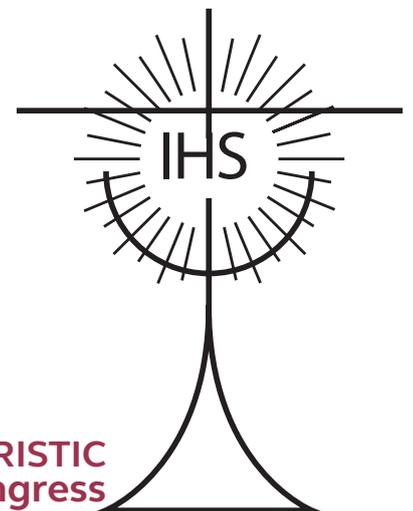
Reading

Colossians 3: 12-17

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Reflection 1

- What helps you to be calm and peaceful?
- What do you give thanks for?



Read with the Church

Documents

from the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI *Sacramentum Caritatis*

The Eucharist, as the sacrament of charity, has a particular relationship with the love of man and woman united in marriage. A deeper understanding of this relationship is needed at the present time... The Eucharist inexhaustibly strengthens the indissoluble unity and love of every Christian marriage. By the power of the sacrament, the marriage bond is intrinsically linked to the eucharistic unity of Christ the Bridegroom and his Bride, the Church (cf. Eph 5:31-32). The mutual consent that husband and wife exchange in Christ, which establishes them as a community of life and love, also has a eucharistic dimension. Indeed, in the theology of Saint Paul, conjugal love is a sacramental sign of Christ's love for his Church, a love culminating in the Cross, the expression of his "marriage" with humanity and at the same time the origin and heart of the Eucharist. For this reason the Church manifests her particular spiritual closeness to all those who have built their family on the sacrament of Matrimony. The family — the domestic Church — is a primary sphere of the Church's life, especially because of its decisive role in the Christian education of children. In this context, the Synod also called for an acknowledgment of the unique mission of women in the family and in society, a mission that needs to be defended, protected and promoted. [cf. 27]

From the Encyclical of Pope Francis *Amoris Laetitia* †

Family prayer is a special way of expressing and strengthening this paschal faith. A few minutes can be found each day to come together before the living God, to tell him our worries, to ask for the needs of our family, to pray for someone experiencing difficulty, to ask for help in showing love, to give thanks for life and for its blessings, and to ask Our Lady to protect us beneath her maternal mantle. With a few simple words, this moment of prayer can do immense good for our families. The various expressions of popular piety are a treasure of spirituality for many families. The family's communal journey of prayer culminates by sharing together in the Eucharist, especially in the context of the Sunday rest. Jesus knocks on the door of families, to share with them the Eucharistic supper (cf. Rev 3:20). There, spouses can always seal anew the paschal covenant which united them and which ought to reflect the covenant which God sealed with mankind in the cross. The Eucharist is the sacrament of the new covenant, where Christ's redemptive work is carried out (cf. Lk 22:20). The close bond between married life and the Eucharist thus becomes all the more clear.* For the food of the Eucharist offers the spouses the strength and incentive needed to live the marriage covenant each day as a "domestic church". [318]

*Nor should we forget that God's covenant with his people is expressed as an espousal (cf. Ez 16:8, 60; Is 62:5; Hos 2:21-22), and that the new covenant is also presented as a betrothal (cf. Rev 19:7; 21:2; Eph 5:25).

Reflection 2

- What are the ways in which the parish supports families and others?
- What are the connecting points between your 'domestic church' (whether one person or many) and the prayer and liturgical life of the parish?

Preparation

What do you wish to be thankful for?

You may be invited to share these (as much or as little as you wish) with the group or you may wish to keep them to yourself.

Prayer

from the World Meeting of Families, Dublin 2018

We are brothers and sisters in Jesus your Son,
One family, in the Spirit of your love.

Bless us with the joy of love.

Make us patient and kind,
gentle and generous,
welcoming to those in need.
Help us to live your forgiveness and peace.

Protect all families with your loving care,
Especially those for whom we now pray:

[We pause and remember family members and others by name].

Increase our faith,
Strengthen our hope,
Keep us safe in your love,
Make us always grateful for the gift of life that we share.

This we ask, through Christ our Lord,
Amen

Following up

Counting our Blessings is a scripture resource that explores the real questions of family life - what's it like to fall in love, or be along someone who is dying, or to ask forgiveness or feel isolated? The experience of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament may lead you to want to reflect on life more deeply, and this simple resource helps make space for conversations that connect loving, and giving and caring for life, with God's loving presence in your situation.

- www.catholicfamily.org.uk/related-work/counting-our-blessings

For more information about the World Meeting of Families, August 2018 in Dublin

- www.worldmeeting2018.ie/en/

Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament

Exposition

Song

Possible themes include: the Eucharist, Gathering, Love of God, and Love of others. Suggested titles:

- Happy are those who are invited (Russian)
- Lord of all hopefulness
- Ubi Caritas (hymn version, e.g. Into one we all are gathered *or* Where charity and love prevail)

Adoration

Reading

- Repeat the Scripture reading (Colossians 3: 12–17) .
- An alternative text would be to repeat a reading from Sunday.

Song

- The reading could be followed by the singing of a simple chant
 - Confitemini Domino (Taizé)
 - Ubi caritas (Taizé)
- *A joy for all the earth* (Ephrem Feeley) Official Hymn for World Meeting of Families 2018
 - www.worldmeeting2018.ie/en/About/Hymn

Prayer

- After a period of silence the prayer for the *World meeting of families*.

Silence

Benediction

Eucharistic Song

- Love is his word
- Sweet Sacrament divine
- The love I have for you

Prayer.

The following is suggested from the Rite:

Lord,
may this sacrament of new life
warm our hearts with your love and make us eager
for the eternal joy of your kingdom.
We ask through Christ our Lord.

Reposition

Acclamation *See Notes*

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