



March 2024

CORNERSTONE

Eucharist: Gift of Love

Become What You Receive

By Rhonda Miska, Director of Communications

In October 2023, I travelled to Rome during the Global Synod Assembly. While I was there, I attended one of Pope Francis' weekly general audiences in St. Peter's Square.

He spoke about St. Charles de Foucauld, a French missionary who lived a life of prayer, simplicity, and solidarity among the Tuareg people in the Algeria.

Pope Francis said this saint was "convinced that 'Eucharistic life' evangelizes." Pope Francis went on to ask us, "Does our going out to others, our service, find its beginning and fulfillment there?"

This question about the

centrality of the Eucharist is worth pondering as we move into Holy Week and the Easter season.



For me, and for many of you reading this, walking up the aisle in the communion procession, is a regular part of our daily or weekly routine.

The Eucharistic minister says, "The Body of Christ." Before we receive, we answer, "Amen!"

What is it that we are saying yes to, what is it we are affirming when we

respond "amen"? Like many things that we do habitually, perhaps we can fall into not being mindful of the significance of this sacred ritual.

There is much in our Catholic tradition that draws us into a greater appreciation and reverence for the Eucharist. Many saints have reflected on the mysterious gift of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, and how our reception of that gift transforms us.

In the Fifth Century, St. Augustine wrote, "Believe what you see, see what you believe, and become what you receive: the Body of Christ."

Seven centuries later, St. Thomas Aquinas wrote "the Eucharist is the sacrament of love: it signifies love, it produces love."

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If you are anything like me, you find trying to love others and live faithfully as a disciple pretty difficult! Daily life can feel just too busy and overwhelming to allow me to be as intentionally loving as I'd like to be. Interpersonal relationships can bring irritations, and are sometimes fraught with thorny conflicts.

Looking beyond my daily life and my personal circle of relationships, I am confronted with a complex world filled with suffering, injustice, and violations of human dignity.

This is why the regular practice of prayerfully receiving the Eucharist, Jesus' self-gift of love, becomes so necessary. When I say "amen" - "yes, may it be so" - I am proclaiming I believe that Jesus is truly present under the species of bread

and wine.

I am also saying yes to the strength, nourishment, and grace that God offers me as I am slowly and steadily transformed. I am saying yes to becoming what I receive so that I can return to my busy life, my complicated relationships, and this complex world, bringing something of God's compassion, mercy, and goodness.

In these pages, you will find reflections from St. Timothy parishioners about how the Eucharist is the "beginning and fulfillment" of their service for others. May these words draw us all into greater appreciation for the Eucharist, gift of love.



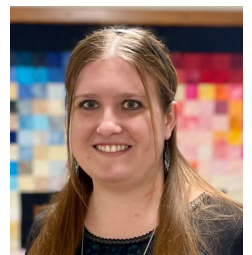
A Word from Kristen Raaen

We begin preparing our children for First Eucharist in February each year. They learn about the Mass, Sacraments of Initiation (of which Eucharist is the second), community, and the Eucharist itself. They practice receiving the Body of Christ. They get dresses and suits. And then they celebrate this special day with their family and our community at St. Timothy's.

My First Communion was on April 26, 1998, here at St. Tim's. Father Harry Tatso presided at the special Mass. The children's choir sang, including several of the first communicants, of which I was one. My family was there, including my great-grandmother. Afterwards, we had a party, with lots of pictures, presents, and cake.

Like baptism and confirmation, a child's First Communion is a brief event that begins a journey in their faith. At our First Communion, we participate in the Mass fully for the first time. We receive the Eucharist, and are no longer a watcher. It isn't the end of the journey that began with our baptism, but a step we make together as we commit ourselves to Christ.

This spring, 36 children in grades two through five will receive the Eucharist for the first time, surrounded by their families. They will go home and celebrate with their families too, while the rest of us remember our own First Communions. At those Masses, as you watch our children go up to the altar to receive the Body of Christ for the first time, think about your first time, and what the Eucharist means to you.



The Eucharist: Food For the Journey

My wife and I recently purchased a newer car. The one we had been driving for ten years needed to be replaced after reaching nearly a quarter-of-a-million miles. We like our newer vehicle, even though we are not sure we will ever use all of its extra bells and whistles. The one extra feature I really appreciate is how it shows me how many miles I have left before I run out of gas. After all, what good is a car with no fuel? So, when I see the tank is getting close to empty, I stop to fill up.

When my dad retired back in 1966, he got involved in delivering Meals on Wheels. When I retired in 2007, I also signed up through St. Tim's Time and Talent initiative to deliver Meals on Wheels. The Meals on Wheels program in Anoka County began in 1973, with St. Timothy as one of the original churches providing volunteer drivers. Since then, nearly two hundred (or maybe even more) parishioners have delivered hot meals to our homebound neighbors in Spring Lake Park, Blaine, Coon Rapids, Fridley, and Columbia Heights. Not only do recipients receive a meal, they also have face-to-face friendly contact with another person. Sometimes it's the only person they will see that day.

What does all this have to do with the Eucharist? For centuries, theologians and scholars have written about the meaning of Jesus' Real Presence. They use lots of language and add lots of bells and whistles. This can end up obscuring and complicating the basic meaning: we truly believe that Christ is Really Present in the Eucharist.

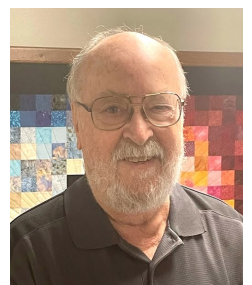
And this presence is not meant to be limited only to our experience inside the church during the hour we are at Sunday Mass.

Jesus' Presence is meant to be made Real through the lives of those who believe in Him. That's one reason I come to celebrate Eucharist together with others on a regular basis. I come not only to experience His Presence as we share at the Eucharistic meal, but also to "fill up my tank" with the fuel I need to spread that presence through service to others. Quite regularly, the homilies and the music at St. Timothy's encourage us and show us how to bring Christ to others every day of our lives.

At St. Tim's, there are multiple opportunities for parishioners to spread Jesus' Presence on a daily basis. Beyond Meals on Wheels, there are those who slice carrots for the soup for Soup Line, those who pour coffee at funeral lunches, those who serve as Befrienders...the list could go on and on! Jesus' words in Matthew 25 point to the truth that Christ is present wherever and whenever His followers offer an act of kindness for someone in need. Our loving service makes that Presence real.

So the next time you stop at a station to fill your car with gas, think also about how to make Christ present to others in your daily life. You might even have to use your car.

- Tom Kosel



Sharing Christ In the Eucharist With Others

In the spring of 1966 my husband Stan and I joined the Church of St. Timothy. Right from the beginning, I committed to getting involved in some of the ministries at the parish. Over the years I have participated in many areas. One of my most cherished experiences at St. Timothy's is serving in Eucharistic ministry and offering members of our community the Body and Blood of Christ at Mass.

When the pandemic began in March 2020 and churches closed their doors, it was a blessing to participate in Mass online. But it was sad not to be able to physically receive the Eucharist. Finally, churches reopened and we were able to return to something closer to normal.

But this return to normal life was disrupted for me in November 2022 when I was diagnosed with breast cancer for the second time in my life. Of course, this diagnosis meant I had to take a break from serving in ministry at St. Timothy's.

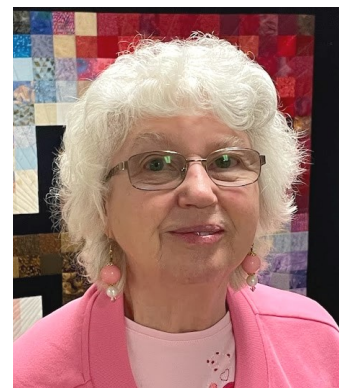
I had a surgical lumpectomy and then began chemotherapy. Chemotherapy led to side effects, the most challenging of which was neuropathy in my hands and feet. I felt a constant tingling in my fingers that made it hard to turn pages or pick things up. The tingling in my feet affected my balance. It has been a long journey learning to walk again and being able to stand without holding onto something. Slowly and surely, I have experienced improvement.

A few months ago I went to the bank. There was only one clerk working and several people ahead of me in line. I stood, waiting my turn. The Holy Spirit prompted me to think that being able to stand unassisted for those 15 or 20 minutes meant I was ready to return to serving as a Eucharistic minister. It was a joyful realization! I contacted Bill Steffl, who coordinates liturgical ministry, to let him know I'd soon be ready to return.

On January 7 at St. Timothy's Mass for the feast of the Epiphany, I walked to the altar, received a ciborium full of consecrated hosts, and went to my assigned place to distribute holy communion. As each person came forward, many with smiles on their faces, I placed Jesus in their hands.

My heart was so filled with love for each and every person and my soul was so filled with joy! There were tears in my eyes. I cannot fully put into words what a beautiful blessing this was for me. I didn't feel any discomfort or tingling in my hands or feet, I only felt the joy of sharing Christ with each person who came forward in the procession.

- Rita Zdon



Eucharist and Service

"How does the Eucharist relate to your effort to serve others through works of charity?" This question, one of the prompts for writing for this issue of the Cornerstone, was an eye-opener for me. I had not connected the service to the Eucharist. I did not grow up in a family that went to church or that volunteered. On my own initiative, I sought out these opportunities and found both rewarding.

As an elementary school child I would ride a bus to a church on Sunday. It didn't matter which church. I tried them all. I ended up joining Spring Lake Park Lutheran because they had a Luther League Club. I was quite involved in volunteer activities there. I was confirmed at Spring Lake Park Lutheran Church, which is now Abiding Savior. Later, I became Catholic.

In high school I continued volunteering in the principal's office and serving lunches. I also served as a member of the student council and as president of the junior class and of the senior class.

Jump forward to 2014 when my husband Phil and I left a church we had been attending and joined the Church of St. Timothy. Determined to become active in the community, we got involved with the Salvation Army Food Shelf, Soup Line, Bible study, serving funeral lunches, Family Promise (a ministry supporting families in Anoka County that are experiencing housing insecurity) and the Knights of Columbus.



One Sunday bulletin had an announcement about a need for a coordinator of Meals on Wheels. This sparked an interest for Phil and me since we were still delivering for our former

church. For a while we delivered meals for our former church and also St. Timothy since the need was so great. The more we became involved in Meals On Wheels, the more we could see the need.

Catholic Social Teaching states clearly and powerfully that the Christian Faithful are also obligated to promote social justice and be mindful of the precept of the Lord to assist those who are poor. Pope Benedict XVI taught that "love for widows, orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind is as essential as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching the gospel."

I can now see how bringing Meals on Wheels to those who cannot provide meals for themselves is connected to the experience of Eucharist. For many people, Meals On Wheels may be their only contact with the outside world, providing not just food but also social connection. I am very proud and grateful to continue as the Meals On Wheels co-coordinator at the Church of St. Timothy.

- Judy Knoll



Being Present To God's Real Presence

My love for Eucharist has been a lifelong journey. Several years ago three women from three different circles in my life shared how they each have a weekly Adoration hour.

I was vaguely familiar with what that was.

People sit in silence in a special chapel before the tabernacle (where consecrated Hosts are reserved) or where the Eucharist is exposed. But I felt that it was not for me. My mind and body are very busy – how could I possibly sit still for an hour?!?

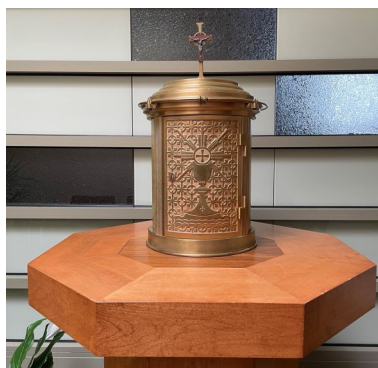
Many times they brought up this “hour” in their conversations with me, sharing beautiful moments they had encountered in silence with our Lord. I decided to take the leap of faith and went to the adoration chapel at St. John the Baptist in New Brighton.

The first time, I made it 20 minutes...but it was a start. The Holy Spirit kept drawing me back; I have been spending time in various adoration chapels in the area as well as sitting quietly in the sanctuary or chapel, before the tabernacle where the Eucharist is reserved. My hunger, reverence, and belief in the Eucharist as truly the Source and Summit of our Catholic faith has become palpable. I find my spirit yearning for this time.

Twenty minute visits have evolved into an hour, with many short visits prior to Mass. We are so blessed at St. Timothy's to have the small chapel, off the entryway by the piano. I didn't know it was there for

several years, until I happened to walk by it when the door was open.

This intimate little chapel has provided an opportunity to silently center myself for a few minutes before Mass and spend a few moments in thanksgiving after Mass.



After multiple pregnancy tragedies, our son and daughter-in-law are now carrying a son, due to arrive in July. When they found out they were pregnant in November, I made a commitment to attend Mass seven days a week (God willing), until that little guy makes his entrance into the world. The fruits that have come out of this are beyond words. I have participated in liturgy in over twelve churches in our vicinity, including Orthodox and Marionite-rite communities, and even in a small monastery chapel. Several of these churches have Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after Mass or at other certain times.

As of this writing, I have been immersed in my commitment for 16 weeks. It started out as an effort. The hardest part was “getting off of my lead bottom” and driving to a church. Now it's part of my daily routine.

The Eucharist is a Love Gift from our Savior. How amazing that He is truly present to us! How can one not be changed when we receive this gift? I have been deeply changed and feel very connected to the Body of Christ.

- *Therese Frederick*



Parishioner in the Spotlight: Jamie Schlough

I have been a member of St. Timothy's for a very long time. My faith journey began when I was baptized at Ascension in North Minneapolis. In 1970 my family moved from Fridley to Blaine, which at the time was out in the country!

I married my high school sweetheart Paul at St. Timothy's 43 years ago. After Paul and I bought our first home in Anoka we joined St. Stephen's. When our daughter Emily got engaged in 2009, she called me to ask me what I thought of having the wedding at St. Tim's. I asked her, "Why not St. Stephen's?" She said, "Because I was baptized at St. Tim's, Mom, and it's where you and Dad were married." It was a beautiful moment for us as parents.

At that time, my parents had come back to St. Tim's for Sunday Mass. They were very fond of Father Chuck. So my husband and I knew it was our time to return to St. Tim's, too! My parents went home to heaven years ago, but I still feel them sitting next to me in church, watching their granddaughter walk down the aisle on her wedding day.

After spending so many years involved with our kids in faith formation programs, my husband and I wanted to try something different at St. Timothy's. As we explored ministry opportunities, we learned of a program serving families that experiencing homelessness. That program has since become Family Promise of Anoka County. Not too long ago I took on the role of Family Promise Coordinator for

the parish. We are proud of our parish's focus on social justice and outreach.

My husband and I also enjoy serving in the food tent for Carnival. Also, I am a leader for Children's Liturgy of the Word on Sundays. Professionally, I work as a volunteer services coordinator at Saint Therese, a senior living community in Brooklyn Park, but I am nearing retirement and will surely explore new volunteer roles!

Our daughter Emily and her husband Adam live in Hastings with our three incredible grandchildren; our son Kevin and his wife Britteny live in Duluth. As a family of nine now, we enjoy activities outdoors: camping, hiking, soccer, golf, and bike riding. During our outdoor adventures I like to remind my grandkids that God must have a great imagination because he created some amazing things in nature.

At St. Tim's we have reconnected with childhood friends and enjoy our new "pew" friends. I recently found my long-lost cousin Dan sitting in a pew not too far from me! Our grandchildren like to come to church with us so they can sit in their great-grandma Josie's spot. They light a candle for her when we leave. The wonderful music and liturgies always remind me that I am in God's holy presence.

For our family, St. Timothy's is a special place with memories of many of life's journeys. We do talk about moving from our family home in Andover, but never too far from our parish home in Blaine!



Come to the Feast

“The Eucharist commits us to the poor.” (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1397) The Eucharist calls us to love tenderly, but, just as strongly, it calls us to act in justice, with no social distinction, no “us or them.” In the communion procession, we are all equal.

Many years ago I attended Mass at St. Stephen’s in Minneapolis where former St.

Timothy’s priest, Father Pat Griffin, served as pastor. There I witnessed what the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist was like. I remember being brought to tears seeing young parents with their small children and older people with their canes. I saw the well-groomed rich and the tattered poor. I saw someone who was blind with a guide dog and others who used mobility aids like crutches and wheelchairs. I saw the diversity of people of different ethnic backgrounds.

The congregants welcomed everyone with opening prayer and readings; they proclaimed the Gospel and prepared the altar with the bread and wine. Only then did Father Pat step in for the consecration. When the congregants presented the Body and Blood to those who were present, I thought, “This must be what Heaven is like!” All were involved, all were equal, and all were welcome to the feast, the table of plenty.

Servant of God Dorothy Day, 20th century writer and social activist and founder of the Catholic Worker movement, was

drawn to Christianity for this very reason: “at Eucharist, the rich and the poor knelt side by side, all equal at that moment.”

I have thought of this experience many times over the years I have been active in ministry at St. Timothy’s. One of the things I love about my Catholic faith is the commitment to charity and justice and no

one does it better than St. Timothy’s! We give generously and provide support through our outreach ministries.

One such opportunity that is near and dear to my heart is our Soup Line. Every month for the last 41 years (even

during the height of the pandemic!), St. Timothy’s has provided food for the hungry at Caring and Sharing Hands, Catholic Charities, and more recently, Steppingstone in Anoka. Volunteers prepare, make, deliver, and serve a substantial meal of chicken soup or salad, fruit, bread, and milk. In doing so, we share Christ with those in need.

Each day, I pray: *Dear God, I offer you all my prayers, works, joys, and suffering today. I ask that you keep me ever mindful of the real presence of your son, Jesus Christ, in all I do and say so that I may treat all with whom I come in contact as Jesus.*

Where and how do you see and serve the real presence of Jesus?

- Carolyn Breitbach



Sharing Christ as a BeFriender Minister

St. Timothy's BeFriender ministers visit those facing transitions or illness and offer them a compassionate, listening presence. BeFrienders also often bring Eucharist if those they visit (their BeFriendees) are unable to attend Mass.

My wife Nancy was interested in learning about the BeFriender ministry, so she met with Maggie Philbrook, the pastoral minister, and decided to attend the sessions to become a BeFriender. Just before the training began, I met with Maggie and decided to participate as well. Coming off the Covid restrictions, we were not sure when we would actually begin our ministry, but hoped that the year-long training would lead to circumstances where we could meet and build relationships with our designated BeFriendees.

I know how powerful receiving of Eucharist can be. The first day we could receive communion after Covid, directly from the Eucharistic minister or priest, was very powerful for me. Also, a member of

St Timothy's brought communion when I was in the hospital. It was such a gift!

When I was matched with my BeFriendee, I asked if he would like to receive Eucharist during our visits, and he said, "Yes." The parish gave me a pyx, a small container for consecrated hosts used to transport the Eucharist in a



reverent way. I take the pyx to the Eucharistic Minister at Mass and receive as many hosts as I require.

Befriender visits are usually about an hour, and we chat about whatever topics come up. My role as a BeFriender is more to listen than to expound my agenda, but I do absolutely share in the discussion.

When the visit is drawing to a close, my BeFriendee

and I pray the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, and an Act of Contrition together. When I offer communion, he always says, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."

This response calls the words that were spoken by the Roman centurion to Jesus when he begged the Lord to heal his sick servant in Matthew 8:8.

I am always refreshed, calmed, and smiling after our visits – even though I am supposed to be gifting him with the Eucharist and my listening presence.

There are about a half-dozen or so parishioners going through training this year to add to the group of BeFriender ministers. If the opportunity arises, consider serving as a BeFriender and offering the gift of compassionate presence to others in our parish family!

- Tim Downey



For Your Reflection

Tim Downey shared about how visiting and sharing communion as a BeFriender leaves him feeling “refreshed and calmed.” What emotions are stirred within you when you receive Jesus in the Eucharist?

Rita Zdon describes the joy she felt in returning to serving as a Eucharistic minister. What experiences at St. Timothy’s have brought you feelings of joy, love, and connection?

Carolyn Breitbach reflected on how the Eucharist calls us not just to serve others but also to recognize our unity, that there is no “us” and “them” in the Body of Christ. How does your experience of the Eucharist challenge you to embrace unity?

Tom Kosel writes about how gathering for Eucharist provides him nourishment to serve others. How does your experience of Sunday worship and receiving Jesus in the Eucharist strengthen you?

Judy Knoll quotes Pope Benedict XVI’s words about care for those in need being as “essential as sacraments and preaching the gospel.” What connection do you see between the sacraments and service of those in need?

Therese Frederick wrote that with her busy body and mind, she thought an hour in silence was not for her. But she has found joy and peace in building silent prayer into her daily routine. What is your experience of silent prayer? Where have you found it challenging and where have you found it life-giving?

Jamie Schlough reflects on her family’s four generations of involvement at St. Timothy’s. Does your parish involvement connect you to other generations in your family?

Kristen Raaen remembered her own first communion and invited us to remember ours. What stands out to you from your preparation for and reception of the Eucharist for the first time?

CORNERSTONE

Editor: Rhonda Miska

Editor Emeritus: Tim Downey

Church of St. Timothy mission: We are a progressive, welcoming Catholic community that values full participation in worship and community service. We commit to being a peace-loving, Eucharistic community providing integrated faith formation and applying gospel values to daily living.

“You are built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, and Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone.” (Ephesians 2:20)



Church of St. Timothy

707 89th Ave NE, Blaine MN 55434

763.784.1329

www.churchofsttimothy.com