

Family Meal As Eucharist

From Calvary, the blood of Christ penetrated the earth, consecrating the world and all that grows from it. As the waters in Ezekiel 47 freshen the waters of the Arabah, providing abundant sea life and a shoreline filled with fruit-bearing trees, the blood of the Christ flows from the sanctuary of his body making all the earth holy.

It is the task of the priest/presider to proclaim what God has done. It is not the priest's role to transform bread and wine into the body and blood of the Christ; it is the priest's task to announce the innate holiness of food and drink.

The shortage of Eucharistic presiders, and the refusal of the Church to credibly address this shortage, seems to deprive many of the blessings of the Eucharist. Yet, there is no shortage of presiders if the head of each household exercises his/her baptismal priesthood and announces to their family what God has already accomplished.

Before the family meal (presuming that the family still gathers for at least one meal a week), the person in the family who is most adept at telling the story should share a passage from scripture. They may read and reflect on a Gospel passage, or invite other members of the family to share reflections. One or all of the readings from the Lectionary could be used.

Then, following the discussion, all gather around the table, on which may be placed a cup of wine and a piece of bread, in addition to the meal.

The leader would pray: Blessed are you, God of all creation. Through your goodness, we have food and drink, which earth has given and human hands have prepared. May they be for us life-giving food and saving drink.

Afterward, all pray: May God accept the gifts we offer with praise and thanksgiving, for our good and the good of all.

The leader would then say: Send your Spirit over these gifts that we may see in them the presence of the Living Christ.

(S)he continues: On the night before he died, Jesus took bread into his hands, gave you thanks and praise, broke the bread, gave it to his friends and said, "Take this, all of you, and eat it. This is my body, which is given for you."

The family could then break and share the bread.

The leader continues: Then, Jesus took the cup and said, "Take this, all of you, and drink from it. This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven."

The family may share the cup at this point, or save it for the final cup of blessing at the end of the meal.

Then all say: When we eat, when we drink, we proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes again.

The leader continues: We eat and drink in union with all humanity, and recognize in this meal, and in each other, the Spirit of the Living God. We pray for those who are nourished at other tables (one could remember here those who are not present), and those who are nourished at none (recall those in need). We celebrate our union with those who ate and drank with Jesus (one could name disciples who are especially relevant by virtue of their names, feasts or seasons); and with all those who ate and drank in his name down through the ages.

Then all could say: For through Christ, with Christ and in Christ all glory and honor are yours, Mighty God, forever and ever. Amen.

All recite the “Our Father,” followed by the exchange of “Peace.”

The leader then says: Holy things for God’s holy people.
Then all eat and drink.

At the conclusion of the meal, the final cup could be shared if it was not shared after the Last Supper Narrative, and final prayers of gratitude could be offered for the meal and for anything else for which the family is grateful.

Before the family leaves the table, or shortly thereafter, the family may want to discuss how they will witness to Jesus during the coming days.

At the conclusion of the meal, what is left over should be handled reverently. What is truly waste can be discarded. What is still edible should be saved for leftovers or somehow used to promote life – by being returned to nature.