



## The Eucharist is Life

Some things to think about as the 'Year of the Eucharist' draws to a close.

- How has the gift of the Eucharist impacted on my life?
- Who gave me my faith in the Eucharist?
- How has that faith grown and deepened over the years? Over the past year?
- In what ways do I share my eucharistic faith with my family and friends?
- Table Topic: What do I remember of my First Communion Day?
- Pray to be opened in fresh and surprising ways to the mystery of Christ's Body and Blood.

Real food that lasts:  
a Eucharistic parable

One of the fond memories from my childhood is the aroma of freshly baked bread and a big pot of soup bubbling away on the stove on a Sunday during winter. This was Dad's favourite meal and he loved to commandeer the kitchen on Sundays and make a simple but delicious vegetable soup for the family as a late lunch or early dinner. Sometimes we joined in the task of chopping and peeling (many a stimulating conversation was had around the chopping board!); other times we left it to the cook (when he was on his own, Dad would sing - badly!). But either way, the aromas that ensued were always a summons to much more than food: they signaled paternal love, warmth, belonging and the sheer gift of having a home and a family. It was a beautiful 'eucharistic' family ritual which I try to continue in the lives of my own children. (Simon)

### Receiving God's gift

A young father says: 'I held out a biscuit to my four year old son and he grabbed it out of my hand. I said, "Hey John, you don't need to snatch it, just hold out your hands and let daddy give you the biscuit.' There is a parable here, is there not, about our relationship with God. In our fear of being left unfulfilled, we try to 'grab' things from God, but when we do that we undermine God's gift. Yet (like Mary) all we need to do is open ourselves in trust and receive God's gift.

**Tip:** Remember this story as you open your palms to receive the body of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Stories from 'Real People - the Gospel in Everyday Life' (The Story Source, 1992-2002)

Bread of life

I recall a very depressed period of my life. I was desperately hurting. I longed for the healing power of God. But God seemed unbearably silent. I heard of a Catholic charismatic healing retreat being held in a country town which was four hours drive away. Feeling somewhat foolish I drove the four hours to the healing retreat and slipped into a back pew of the church where a large crowd was gathered.

The leaders of the retreat were famous for their healing ministry. At one stage they walked around the church with the Blessed Sacrament held high, urging those gathered to 'look upon the body of Jesus and to draw on the healing power of his death and resurrection'. Having heard the stories of people being healed instantly in such ceremonies, I *looked and looked and prayed and prayed and cried out to God in my heart...*

Then I drove the four hour journey home feeling much the same as when I had set out!

But was I the same? Although I had sought a miracle, deeper than that I had made an act of faith. I was prepared to trust that the grace of that retreat would manifest itself in my life in a time and manner known to God...

As the years went by I did find hope, healing, wholeness. In fact, today I actually feel *grateful* for those sufferings. Without them I would not have discovered the depths of God's love for me. I would not be the person I am today: graced in wondrous ways I could never have imagined.

Did that retreat make a difference? Lots of special moments, prayers and people contributed to my healing over time. And among them I have a vivid memory of the body of Christ in the Eucharistic host held high amidst the body of Christ in the people of the church. Yes, I do believe that God heard my prayers that day. (Anna)