

**Homily for October 17, 2004
29th Sunday of the Year in
the Year of the Eucharist**

By Father Charles Bowes

Year of the Eucharist

Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, has declared the period from this October until next October as the Year of the Eucharist.

The Priests' Council of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati has asked the Worship Office to provide material for us to use for brief reflections on the Eucharist at Sunday Masses during this year. I hope to be using this material roughly every other week or so throughout this special year. It is our hope that these reflections will provide a bit of information about the Mass and a bit of inspiration that will help us live the Eucharist all week long.

We begin today with a basic question for all of us: What brings us here? What makes us gather week after week for this liturgy, this public prayer we call the Mass?

There are probably a lot of answers to that question. Some of us come because it's a habit. Others come out of obligation. Some come because their parents insist on it. Some come for a time of relative peace and quiet. Others come to seek the Lord. Some come because they are burdened with problems. Others come because they are grateful for God's gifts. And many of us come for several of those reasons combined.

More basic than all of those reasons, however, we all come because God has called us here. It was God who chose us to be members of the Church. It was God who called us to share God's own life through baptism. Whether it was baptism as an infant or in answer to a call received later in life – no matter what form that call took – still it was God's call, God's deed...a call we answer this moment by our presence. It was God who called us to carry on the mission of Christ in the world today. We come to Mass in response to God's call.

And we come for Eucharist, which comes from the Greek word for thanksgiving. We gather here each week to give God thanks and praise. Sometimes we may forget that. It's easy to focus on what we hope to get out of coming to church rather than on giving thanks for what God has already given us.

The most important thing we find when we gather here is the presence of Christ himself. Christ reveals his presence to us in various ways. He is present in our very gathering, living in each of us who are his tabernacles. He is present as the leader of our worship. He speaks directly to us when God's word is proclaimed in our midst. He offers us his own body and blood as our food and drink so that we will be more closely united with him and with one another.

We come because Christ is here, and because he calls us. Through baptism, we all became members of his body, and we come here to remember who we are.

Here we are reunited with one another and with him who is our head. And when we leave here, we go forth carrying Christ with us, taking him to our world that is in such need of his presence and his love. He teaches us and feeds us here to strengthen us to be Christ-bearers all week. We shall this week, as every week, go forth from this place to love and serve the Lord.

Year of the Eucharist