

**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT
Year A March 9, 2013**

Theme: What do you bring to the Table?

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What do you “bring to the table” today?

The common English idiom “bring to the table” signifies the contribution a person makes to the communal project, what someone offers to what the group has undertaken.

For us this morning, the question asks what each of us has brought to this altar table to be joined to the offering of Jesus Christ.

In this Lenten season our parish is focused on the concept of “Living the Eucharist”, that is, how the liturgical rite we celebrate here is an expression of how we live, and how we live is ritualized in this liturgy.

Thus, let’s focus today on what we bring to this liturgy from our lives this past week to be joined to the offering of Jesus Christ.

Think back over this week and all you did; all you were involved in; the people you encountered; the places you went.

Of all that, what do you bring to the table?

----what do you join to Christ’s offering of himself, of his Body and his Blood, as a gift to the Father?

---what do you join to the rest of the Church, all your Christian brothers and sisters, as our offering with Christ for the salvation of the world?

Some of what we bring comes through our personal lives and families:

---several among us bring their struggle to live as new widows and widowers, learning to live alone, to cope with life without a longtime spouse.

---some parents trying mightily to cope with adult children addicted to drugs and other substances, some unable to cope with illnesses.

---another family among us is tied in knots due to Alzheimer's in a family member.

---another worries about a sick infant; still another the prospect of an organ transplant.

All of this us brought to the table today.

From our work we bring so much as well:

The opportunity to expand your operation and bring a few more jobs to our area.

The office secretary whose autistic son you were able to get into a special ed program through your company insurance this past week.

The children in a broken family in the midst of a custody battle with whom you have worked all week, not knowing if they will ever have a stable home to live in.

All of these you bring to the table of Eucharist this week.

Some of you bring two busy "fish fry days" raising money for parish organizations and your tired muscles and bones.

When the bread and wine are carried in procession to the Table from the congregation every week, all the work of charity and justice that we, the Living Body of Christ, have been doing out there in the world, is heaped upon the plate and poured into the Chalice.

Not only are Christ's Body and Blood being offered to the Father, but we are being joined to him and offered along with him to the Father.

For this reason, the Eucharistic Prayers of our Liturgy terms what we do here **“a holy and living sacrifice.”**

Nothing is taken away from the unique, awesome holiness of Christ's sacrifice but it rather allows us to become come part of that sacrifice here and now, to make it live in our own time.

What we bring to the table is then consecrated and transformed and made holy by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thus from the Table we take what we brought to the Table but what is now joined to the eternal and perfect offering of Christ himself.

From the Table we take the power and energy to face another week of living as Jesus lived, with self-giving, compassion and justice even for the stranger.

From the Table we take the Food and Drink which will sustain and nourish us for another week of “Living the Eucharist”.