

Sermon Dec. 30, 2018  
Fr. Mark Moline

I can remember on more than one occasion, back when our son Matthew was just learning to crawl and scoot around on the floor. Matthew and I would be in the TV room of our small townhouse; Judy was always out in the kitchen making something good for us to eat. Matthew wasn't really going anywhere, but I would take my eyes off him for a second or two, and become self-absorbed in the game. Then Judy's stressed voice from the kitchen would suddenly snap me back to reality, "Where's the Baby?"

All of a sudden it was no longer all that important that Sonny Jurgenson was just not getting the protection he needed from his front line. "Where is the baby?" took precedence over all else.

Now, the baby was always there – I had just taken my eyes off of him for a very brief moment. He was almost always under the coffee table, (I sometimes think both our children spent the first ten years of their life under that coffee table and then when we got the dog he moved under their with them.) - but "the Baby" was always there close by for us.

Two thousand years ago an Angel appeared to some humble shepherds in a field, and that Angel said, go find the baby. During this Christmas season, I think if we were to listen ever so carefully, we would still hear that Angel's voice proclaiming to us "go find the baby."

Well, where do begin our search for him? For starters let me suggest we go to the table. Not a coffee table—but a supper table. Have you ever wondered why we always celebrate in church the season of our Lord's first supper with his last supper?

If that seems to be a bit of a stretch, if that sounds like a contradiction of terms, then perhaps we have too narrow of an impression of the meaning of that sacrament. Perhaps we are coming to that table for solace only, and not for strength, for pardon only and not renewal."

If Eucharist seems more suited to Holy Week than the Christmas Season, then Perhaps we only see the blood as a symbol of sacrifice and not the symbol of life it is.

I've received whole blood on a few occasions, and when conscious I've experienced that beautiful source of life-giving energy. I remember the first time

being so sick and ready to die – and after the first unit I was asking when I could get out of ICU. After the third unit, I thought I was ready to go home.

Perhaps we are considering only the brokenness or dismemberment of the bread, and missing the part about the remembrance or reassembly of the broken body.

I am the bread of life, I am the resurrection and the life, I am the way, the truth and the life. It is the very nature of God to give life through bread. He becomes the bread and we feed on Him in our hearts through faith. If the last supper seems out of place with our Lord's first supper, Perhaps there are words in the sacrament that we are brushing over too lightly. For example, "We praise you joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn."

You see theologically speaking, we are not copying the original Eucharist meal each time we celebrate communion. If you received communion 52 times in 2018 you did not have 52 separate meals. Because God transcends time, - you participated in just one meal and that meal was the original eucharist meal – As Gabriel told Mary, His Kingdom is for ever.

God transcends time and God transcends space, so who are we joining in this meal? The angels are there – that angel who told the shepherds about the baby is partaking. – And Archangels – so Gabriel – is also there --- and all the company of heaven is there and we join them in their hymn. Do you know what that means? All the company of heaven – including all those whom we love but see no more. With Holy Eucharist - Christmas really does become a family holiday that stirs our hope and our faith.

The Children's Pageant was the afternoon of the 24th, but if we look at the Eucharist with the spiritual eyes of our hearts, I think this morning we can still see the angels and the shepherds. Mary and Joseph are still there ---- and there's all the saints, and prophets, apostles and martyrs and with all those from every generation who have looked to God in hope --- all the company of heaven there in that spectacular manger scene called Holy Eucharist. --- and there at the very center of it all is Jesus – Where's the baby? There's the table. Perhaps this Christmas Season we will find him there.