

My brother and I were camping recently and musing about how much we took for granted as kids on our family camping trips. As kids, we were oblivious to all of the planning and work that went into making our meals. We were too concerned with playing and having fun to realize the work that our parents did to put food on the picnic table. Going camping on our own, however, we got to see firsthand that everything takes planning and work--we had to buy the ingredients, pack the utensils and the stove, and then make everything when the time came. And when we sat down to eat our breakfast burritos that morning, it was satisfying.

There is a certain humility built into being a parent. You know that most of the hard work you do, such as cooking meals for your children, is going to go unnoticed. Often enough, your kids will have full bellies without so much as a "thank you." But this is what being a parent means--doing the loving things even when they go unnoticed. The Mass tonight reminds us of perhaps the most humble, loving act ever done for a family--the preparing of the sacrificial and saving meal of the Eucharist for us, God's family.

God's humility is on full display for us in the Gospel. The King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, God's Word through Whom all things were made, takes off his outer garments and humbly washes the feet of his disciples. This act of humility speaks volumes. Slaves were the ones assigned to clean the dirty feet of those who came to dinner, yet Jesus puts *Himself* in this role to give the ultimate example of what love looks like. St. John reminds us in the Gospel that Jesus "loved His own in the world and loved them to the end." By performing this act of humble service, Jesus shows us the most powerful form of love. Humble love. Love that is other-centered and self-forgetful. Love that is happy to serve, even when the service goes unnoticed.

This type of love is exactly what we encounter every time we gather at the Eucharistic table, at the altar where we meet the Lamb of God. The lamb of the Passover was eaten by Jewish families year after year to remind them

of God's awesome power which freed them by striking down their Egyptian oppressors to the very root. Something even more extraordinary happens at the fulfillment of Passover, the Eucharist. But it happens in the most unexpected manner. It happens with the ultimate act of humility.

Here at this altar, Emmanuel, God with us, strips off the outer garments of His human appearance and comes to us in the most humble way, hidden under the appearance and taste of bread and wine. Here in this meal, so often He endures our unthankfulness, our thoughtlessness. Here, where the very name of the Eucharist reminds us that this is all about thanksgiving, so often we forget to thank God for feeding us with Himself, for giving us access not just to any lamb, but the Lamb of God, the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world!

God meets and feeds us so humbly in the Eucharist to teach us a lesson about our lives and priorities. When we go about our days focused on ourselves, so often we miss the simple but powerful ways that God wants to speak to us and be with us--through the scriptures, in the daily conversation of prayer, through those we love, in our triumphs, our failings, and in all the ordinary moments of our lives. If we miss God in this ultimately humble banquet that He prepares for us at every Mass, we will likely miss Him in all of those other moments as well.

So tonight let us pray for humble hearts. Let us embrace that self-giving love of Jesus that we have access to when we receive Him in the Eucharist. Let us truly give thanks for our humble God who gives us all we need and likewise invites us to be generous. I humbly ask you to pray for us priests called to serve in the person of the Master. Pray for us that we would humbly lay ourselves down as Jesus teaches and let His Eucharistic heart be the model and source of our priestly hearts.

I pray on this glorious night: *Jesus, give us hearts of humility, hearts focused on giving rather than receiving. Help us to not take You for granted*

*in the Eucharist, but let us welcome You every time we receive You in this most humble way. Teach us how to live eucharistic lives given for You and others in humble love. Amen.*