

My parents said to me last week, "Have you heard about your nephew Brian?" Brian is a high school senior; wants to go into sports broadcasting; introduces the school basketball players before each game by announcing what grade school they came from. "No," I said, "I haven't heard about Brian; what's he been up to?" "He's on spring break," they said, "in Cancun." And I'm thinking back to my senior year in high school, goin', "This is different." I called my nephew this week. Got the family recording. It was Brian's voice: "This is the Turners; obviously we can't take your call right now, if you--well, if you don't what to do with one of these machines, you're really a moron." Bleep. Then I got to wondering, "What does a parent feel like when their high school senior goes to Cancun for spring break?" The more I thought about that question, the more I realized how glad I was not to know what that feels like. Parents usually wish they could be with their kids in every potentially dangerous situation. Not to spy on them, but to support and guide them. When a child goes forth on an adventure alone, the best a parent can offer is good advice and good equipment.

This is how I imagine Jesus at the Last Supper: saying goodbye to the kids. *He's leaving them.* All he can give them is good advice and good equipment. He's been giving them good advice all along, so when they go out alone, they'll never be alone, his word will always be with them. But at the end, he gives them equipment, food they can take for the journey. *He's leaving,* but he gives them food. And what food it is. He took bread and said, "This is my body." He took wine and said, "This is my blood. Eat it; drink it," he said. "Do this in memory of me." Notice he proclaims what the food is, he invites them to eat and drink, and then asks them to keep on doing it. Why? Because that way the kids would never be alone; he would always be with them, always. The eucharist is about love; it's about God's love for us; it's about God's desire that we never doubt, that we never fear, that we never be alone.

When we receive receive the eucharist, our hearts are overcome with thanksgiving for this love which God gives to us so freely. In that gratitude we simply must love someone in turn. The eucharist is never complete until it moves us to love. Love frightens some people. To love is to take a risk; it may demand more than we want to give. But if we're truly thankful, we'll take that risk.

My sisters and brothers we gather here tonight to show our love for God but look at what God gives us: a community we call the body of Christ, and a communion we call his body and blood.

Even when a parent does not go to Cancun with a child, the parent is there, present by word and example, present in discretion, and present in joy. Just so, Jesus is here, present in his word, present in the eucharist, and present in our joy. This eucharist gives us more than we can hold, and it asks from us more than we want to do. If you have feared stepping out in love, if you have feared service because you don't know where it will lead, then eat this bread and drink this cup. As Christ gives himself to you, give yourself to Christ.