

Giving thanks
Today We Remember Tomorrow
By Bill Lewellis

Some ten to fifteen years ago, Jane Teter was about to preside at our weekly Eucharist at Diocesan House. It was September 13th. I remember the day, though not the year, because I associate it with the next day, the Feast of the Holy Cross. Jane explained that on this ordinary day of the church calendar, we would use the Holy Cross readings and prayers. As she sensed herself getting caught in a circular explanation, she escaped with, "So ... *today we remember tomorrow.*"

The words sang. They summed up for me what we do every time we celebrate Eucharist.

Today ... any day, any time.

We ... whether three or 300 ... we ... do this thing together ... whether I'm in the presider's chair or sitting with the assembly, first listening and thinking together ... then making eucharist together. It is we who do this ... a great cloud of witnesses.

Remember ... That's the heart of it. We make eucharist by remembering. We give thanks by remembering the acts of God through the multi-millennial history of our universe ... and the fourscore years of our lives. "We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love you have made known to us ... in creation ... in the calling of Israel to be your people ... in your Word spoken through the prophets, and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus your Son ... On the night before he died for us, he took bread ... Do this for the remembrance of me. After supper, he took the cup of wine ... he gave it to them ... Drink this ... for the remembrance of me ..."

Tomorrow ... Imagine. Remembering tomorrow! God's promises. Our hope ... not wishes ... hope.

Hope. I recently came across a story/image that resonates with my own prejudices. A former nun is the protagonist of *Severina*, a posthumously published book of Italian author Ignazio Silone. As she lay dying of a wound received during a protest, one of the sisters from her former convent comes to her deathbed. She takes Severina's hand, saying, "Severina, Severina, tell me you believe." Severina says, "No ... *but I hope.*"

Who could say that is not a profession of faith? I wonder. *But I hope. I trust ... I remember tomorrow.*

"There is but one fundamental truth for Christians," Bishop Paul preached at our Cathedral on All Souls Day. It is that "in Christ we are tied to God and each other in a way that the circumstances of time and space cannot defeat."

A phrase that came to me several weeks ago in conversation was that relationships trump doctrine. (Give me some slack with that.)

Bishop Paul continued: "One day we will be the ones remembered at a liturgy very like this one: we will be the ones being held in the minds and hearts of those slightly behind us in the grand procession toward the heart of God ... "He said that doing what we do today in the words and hymns of this liturgy, we "gently heal our past ... and calmly embrace our future."

Today ... We ... Remember ... Tomorrow.

In our eucharistic remembrance, always and everywhere giving thanks, gently healing our past and calmly embracing our future, we remember tomorrow.

Since that day before the Feast of the Holy Cross, ten to fifteen years ago, *today we remember tomorrow* has gradually become my prayer before eucharist, my *praeparatio ad missam*. It takes me to God's reality when I need to resist the urge to reduce reality to narrow horizons.