You may be confused by this month’s title, but let me explain. The word Eucharist actually means thanksgiving, so each and every time we go to Mass is an opportunity to give thanks to God. In fact, every time we contemplate the gift of the Eucharist in our lives, visit a tabernacle, or drive by a Catholic Church, we should be reminded to give thanks for the gift of God in our lives. Emmanuel, a name for Christ, means “God with us,” and the Eucharist is the ultimate reminder of this. In the Bread of Life, we have the God of the universe here, and when we receive Him, He is within us. What a beautiful treasure to contemplate.

So, how do we take this gift of thanksgiving with us as we approach the holiday of Thanksgiving, where we may encounter loved ones who no longer share or practice our faith? This is a topic of an upcoming event with Father Philip Brune, but I’d like to offer a few suggestions of how to bring the light of Christ no matter where you will spend your holiday dinner, or who you will see. Remember, Christ is with us. Do not be afraid as you fear difficult conversations, or interactions with those who may challenge you. Like Christ was in the boat with the disciples during the storm, He is with you too as you sit down for Thanksgiving dinner. Here are 3 ways to bring Christ to the Thanksgiving table:

**Dinner & Discussion**

*Reaching out to loved ones over the holidays*

We all know family members and friends who may not be practicing the Catholic faith. Father Philip Brune, pastor of St. Robert Bellarmine Catholic Church in El Campo, will lead us in a discussion about how to love these people who are so close to our hearts over the upcoming holidays, inviting them into deeper relationship with us, Christ and His Church. Open to adults ages 18 and up.

**Friday, November 19 from 6pm to 7:30pm**

Adoration & Confession available afterwards

St. Robert Bellarmine Catholic Church Parish Hall
512 Tegner St, El Campo, TX 77437

$40 per couple, $25 per individual (dinner included)

Register at [www.victoriadiocese.org/family-ambassadors](http://www.victoriadiocese.org/family-ambassadors)

*Space is limited, please sign up soon!*

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**Thanksgiving**

*A holiday with a Catholic name*

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**Families of Joy!** November 2021

Diocese of Victoria Newsletter for Families

Sponsored by the Office of Family Evangelization
1. **Prayer. Before, during, and after.** As you gear up for the holidays and visiting family and friends, make sure to keep your faith burning brightly. This is an ideal time for evangelization and sharing God’s love with others. Make sure those “staples” in your life don’t dissipate over this season, when schedules are often thrown off. Daily prayer, regular Confession, and at least weekly Mass are key. And as you get ready to see family and friends, make sure to be praying for them and those conversations. Pray during the visit, especially offering to lead the blessing of the meal if no one else will (don’t be afraid to be the “religious” one), and pray after those interactions, that seeds of faith will continue to grow in their lives. There’s the old saying what we may be the only Bible someone ever reads. Let’s live that out over this time of the year!

2. **Don’t push your faith on others, or answer questions that haven’t been asked.** For example, if you know someone you go to see has stopped attending Mass, be patient and loving in how you approach that conversation. Ask thoughtful questions about their life, and if spirituality comes up, continue to ask good questions to open a door. Don’t answer a question they don’t ask, but meet them where they are in their faith journey. And if you feel God calling you to say something, don’t be afraid! God wants us to be bold in our faith, but also speak with love and charity. As 1 Corinthians 13:1 tells us, “If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a re-sounding gong or a clashing cymbal.” (NABRE translation). And in 1 Peter 3:15-16, “But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame.”

3. **Show your faith with your actions.** Be the first to offer to help with setting up the table, or serving the food. Be the last when it comes to taking places of honor, or the seat at the table, or serving your plate. Show them what a Christian witness looks like, so they may be struck by your actions, and contemplate what makes your conduct different than others. “Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father,” - Matthew 5:16. Oftentimes, its our witness that will win others over, rather than our words. Do what you can with your mind and body to win others for Christ, and let God take care of the rest. For we must always remember there is only One Savior, and it’s not us. It’s Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is the one who wins hearts. He is the one who heals. He is the one who calls. We are merely his messengers, representatives, and followers.

I pray this article has helped you prepare for the holidays! I know they can be a stressful time, as well as very joy-filled. If we bring Christ with us, we are always promised peace through Him. God Bless!

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All for the Sacred and Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, all through the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, all in union with St. Joseph. Amen.