

My Love of the Eucharist and My Experience Bringing Eucharist to the Homebound

*Lenten Witness Talk by Jan Chidley
Tuesday, March 6, 2018*

Good evening. I'm Janet Chidley. I've been a member of Resurrection Parish for over 40 years. Deacon Mike asked me to talk about my relationship to Eucharist and the ministry of Communion to the sick and homebound.

Recently an acquaintance was surprised when I told her how many people attended daily and Sunday masses at Resurrection. Then she replied, "Oh yeah, Catholics *have* to go to Mass."

You and I know that we are not here because we have to, but because we choose to come, and the Eucharist is what calls us to be here. I have always been attracted to the Eucharist. When I was a child and was just developing a sense of spirituality, I felt comforted and fed by Sunday morning Mass with my family. When I was in high school, one of my teachers challenged us to answer the question of what the Eucharist really meant to us. What did we really believe? That question resonated with me and stayed with me as I explored my relationship to Christ. The call continued into college when many young people were exploring being an individual, and often discontinued church attendance. Not I. I trudged across campus every Sunday to ask the Lord to help me through often difficult decisions and sometimes confusing choices.

After I was married and pregnant, we lived on Lowell Street, near Clarke College, I walked—because I didn't drive—down Clarke Drive and down the big hill to thank God for the miracle of birth. The only problem was having to walk back up the big hill.

Years later, a good friend who was a Eucharistic Minister to the sick and homebound touched me with her stories and her commitment to that ministry. It seemed like a good fit for me and I've been doing it ever since. Some of my visits are short term. I take communion to those who are ill or recovering from surgery. They are so grateful to receive communion and to hear news of Resurrection. I am graced to hear their stories of their journeys through illness and recovery. We pray and form fast bonds. When each recovers and is able to return to Resurrection, I am given a new person to visit.

I also have been taking communion to parishioners who are permanently homebound. In addition to prayer and Eucharist, I bring news from the outside. We talk about the weather, the news, what's going on in the parish. They share their stories and spiritual journeys. We have become very good friends.

Some people tell me this seems like a hard thing to do, but it is the easiest and most rewarding thing I do each week. It is always a gift to me and I feel very blessed to be part of the Resurrection team who participates in this ministry each week.