

Notes from the Liturgist, Ace Tupasi

People of the ALTAR

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“Jesus said to his disciples: If you bring your gift to the altar and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift at the altar, go first to be reconciled with your brother, and then come offer your gift.” (Mt. 5:23-24)

We are a people of the altar. We go to the altar, are sent from the altar and come back to the altar. It is the center of our lives that centers our lives.

What is the altar? It represents Jesus who gave his life for us. He is the Lamb of God who takes away all the sins of the world. He takes away our sins, which always divide us from God and each other, so that we might live in communion.

The altar is our call to live in communion which God’s ways. Communion is only possible with others and all creation when we are in communion with God. Each time we come to church as people of the altar, we deeply reflect on how we have chosen to live our lives. We look at how we have chosen communion with God and others or broken that communion. At the beginning of each mass we confess and ask forgiveness for all the ways we have broken communion with God and each other. We ask God to forgive us for forsaking his life, and we ask our brothers and sisters to pray for us that we might choose communion with God. Then we pray and read scriptures to learn how to be in greater communion with God and others. This leads to receiving Jesus in communion at the altar. We receive the very Body and Blood of Jesus. Then, as a people who have received communion, we are sent from the altar to go live that communion more fully. And we will return to the altar, to ask forgiveness for the ways we have broken communion and learn to grow more in the Communion of life God is.

Receiving Jesus at the altar is our call to communion. Every time you go to the altar is an altar call.

Come and let’s go to the Altar.