

5, Easter, A, 2008
St. Raphael, Springdale, AR

I love to go to Little Rock and visit my parents. Do you know what is the first sign that tells me I am home? It's the way my parents' home smells. As soon as you walk in the door you immediately smell the Indian cooking, even if my parents have not been cooking that day, you can still smell the curry and the spices in the air. One friend of mine in high school used to love to come over to our house, and he couldn't wait to smell the Indian food. One day he said he loved the smell of the Indian food so much he wanted to take a bite out of the kitchen door. I said the furniture is fine, but stay away from my family! But what makes a house a home is often the cooking, the food and the fellowship that it fosters. I've visited a lot of parishioners in their homes for supper: it's something that I not only **enjoy** doing, it's something I **need** to do, since I can't cook. And I'm amazed how houses these days are designed with large kitchens and dining areas. One family even had a kitchen and breakfast area that was bigger than their living room. They explained that is where they spent all their time and they wanted it to be spacious. You see, food and fellowship is what makes a house into a home.

In the gospel today Jesus also talks about making a home for us in heaven. He assures His disciples that in His Father's house there are many dwelling places. And He says that He is going to prepare a place for them so that they can be together. What is Jesus talking about? He's saying that He will make His Father's house into our home. How? Well,

because that is where we will enjoy true food, and endless fellowship: that food will be the Eucharist and the fellowship will be with the saints. A few years ago I asked the children at a school Mass what they thought we will be doing forever in heaven. One student said: "Playing video games?" I replied, "Uh, no." Another said: "Be at recess forever?" Again, I said, "Not exactly." A third said: "Eating all the pizza we want?" I said, "No." Then I told them, "In heaven we will be at Mass forever!" The kids had this alarmed look on their face, and one even blurted out: "Oh, no!" At least he was honest. You see, in heaven we will enjoy the best of all food – even better than my mom's Indian food! – and be surrounded by the best of all company, and that glorious celebration is what will make heaven our home.

I recently came across this little joke. An elderly gentleman of 85 feared that his wife was getting hard of hearing. So, one day he called her doctor to have her hearing checked. The doctor made an appointment, but also suggested an inconspicuous little test the man could do at home to gauge his wife's hearing. "Here's what you do," said the doctor, "start out about 40 feet away from her, and in a normal speaking voice see if she hears you. If not, go to 30 feet, then 20 feet, and so on until you get a response." Well, that evening the wife was in the kitchen preparing supper. He was in the living room, and decided to try the test, and said in a normal voice: "Honey, what's for supper?" No response. So, he moves to the other side of the room, about 30 feet away and repeats, "Honey, what's for supper?" Still,

no response. Next he moves into the dining room, where he's 20 feet away and asks, "Honey, what's for supper?" Again he gets no response. So he walks up to the kitchen door, only 10 feet away. "Honey, what's for supper?" Again, nothing. So, he walks right up behind her, "Honey, what's for supper?" She says: "Darn it, Earl, for the 5th time, CHICKEN!" But aren't we a little like that elderly gentleman: Jesus tells us that He's preparing a delicious banquet every Sunday on earth, and eternally in heaven: the bread and wine of the Eucharist. But we're often deaf to what He says, or we ignore the invitation, or we think Jesus is the one with the problem. The food and fellowship we share here at St. Raphael is what makes this building into our spiritual home.

This weekend we have 50 children who will taste Jesus' cooking skills for the first time. It is a moment that we never forget; I'm sure many of you still remember vividly your first Communion. For 2 years of preparation, these children have been getting closer and closer to Jesus; kind of like that elderly gentleman was sneaking up on his wife. And today they no longer need to ask, "What's for supper?" they can taste it for themselves. Folks, today my fervent prayer for them is that this **First** Holy Communion will not be their **last**; that they come Sunday after Sunday to taste what's for supper. Of course, that depends on you, Mom and Dad, to bring them.

This week I'll be going to Little Rock to visit my parents. One of the first questions out of my mouth when I

walk in the door will be, "What's for supper!?" Every time we walk through the doors of St. Raphael we know what's for supper: Jesus' Body and Blood in the Eucharist. Do you need me to repeat that again for you?

Praised be Jesus Christ!