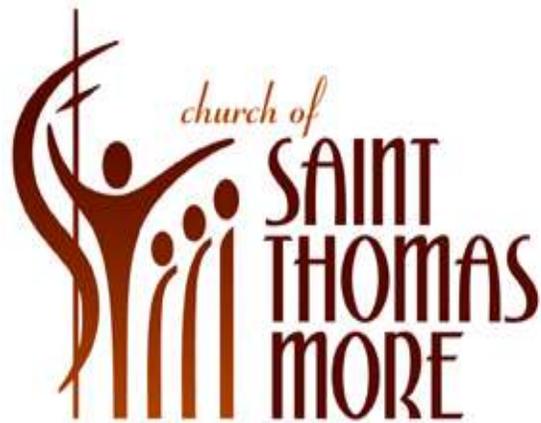


Anamnesis

What a word to remember!

And that's exactly the point: "*Anamnesis*" is a Greek word that means "memory", but not the same way that we think about a memory. We tend to look at memory as recalling something that happened in the past. "*Anamnesis*" is understood as remembering in such a way that the event of the past is actually made present once again.



It's a tough concept to grasp: re-actualizing for today something that occurred in the past. Our Jewish brothers and sisters understand this in their celebration of the Seder meal at Passover. As part of that celebration, a child will ask the question, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" The answer is the retelling of the story of how God freed Moses and the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. In the telling, the event becomes real again and all are reminded of the covenant God made with them. God's past deeds become present again and accomplish their effects for all who share the current Passover meal.

Our *Anamnesis* is our remembering, our making present, God's saving deeds in Christ so that the fullness and power of those deeds of the past - his life, death, resurrection and ascension - take effect in our lives here and now. It is with this understanding that we recall Christ's command, "Do this in memory of me."

Each of our Eucharist Prayers draws out the implications of that command in context of the Paschal Mystery, proclaimed in the Memorial Acclamation. The Roman Canon (Prayer 1) says "Father, we celebrate the memory of Christ your Son. We your people and your ministers recall his passion, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into glory." The other prayers name other aspects of the mystery of salvation and promise of Christ's coming in glory. In each prayer, the language of the *Anamnesis* links this memorial to our offering.

Thus, our prayer, voiced by the priest, makes a living memory of Christ's saving deeds. A connection is made between the past and the present. Those events become real again, and we too are reminded that in Christ, God is faithful to his covenant with us. And by keeping our focus on Christ's coming in glory, you might say that *Anamnesis* is a way of remembering into the future!

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