

## The Gifts of Christmas: Cherished Memories, An Epiphany and A Book

This Christmas, I received three notable gifts - no, not gold, frankincense, and myrrh; but cherished memories, an epiphany and a wonderful book.

My holiday was spent in Minneapolis with my siblings, enjoying the traditional Ukrainian Christmas Eve dinner and attending Mass to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord. We watched home movies of what we dubbed “The Wonder Years: 1957 to 1967”, documenting not just the birthdays and graduations and trips to Niagara Falls, but all the sacraments as well: baptisms, weddings, and First Communions. And the priceless annual photo shoots of everyone dressed in their ‘Sunday Best’ before marching off to Easter and Christmas Masses. The grainy but cherished videos captured what was important to Catholic families then, where going to church to celebrate the sacraments was paramount. The gift of revisiting memories with my family was priceless.

My second gift was an epiphany. As I watched the video montage of a decade of growing up in a Catholic family, I once again realized what a priceless gift of faith was left to us by our parents. And now the task of bringing up the next generation of Catholics falls to each and everyone of us. That is what I love about being a part of the faith formation team at St. Elizabeth of the Trinity: the opportunity to introduce Jesus to our children through the sacraments. Which brings me to my third gift: the *Beautiful Eucharist* book.



This book is available in the church vestibule, a gift from the parish to all of us. It is promoted as a collection of “lifechanging reflections” on the Eucharist, and how “Jesus is waiting in the Eucharist to transform families, Churches, communities, and the culture as a whole.” Lifechanging? Really? What is the last book you read that was truly lifechanging? Well, you may not find this one on Oprah’s Book Club reading list, but I can tell you that this book does have messages that can be lifechanging.

I read Matthew Kelly’s introduction, and I could not put the book down. This book will deepen your appreciation for the most wonderous gift given to us – the Eucharist. This is the devotion to Jesus that will fill our pews, that will embolden us to pass on the faith to our children, that will change our culture, (and maybe fill the pages of Facebook and Instagram with even more pictures of families celebrating the sacraments, dressed in their Sunday best.) I encourage you to grab a copy of *Beautiful Eucharist* and read the intro and at least one of the 12 short reflections. Let me know what you think – I’d love to hear from you. May the Light of Christmas continue to shine brightly in your hearts and in your homes.

- Peggy Bradley, Coordinator of Religious Education