

POPE BENEDICT & OUR *BOOK OF PRAYER INTENTIONS*

No, I don't exactly think Pope Benedict XVI knows about the celebration of the Eucharist at Our Savior church! But in his currently issued Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, paragraph 47, he does discuss the presentation of the gifts. And his words in this context seem appropriate for us to hear:

“This humble and simple gesture is actually very significant...In this way we also bring to the altar all the pain and suffering of the world, in the certainty that everything has value in God's eyes.”

The Pope goes on to declare that in this way we are enabled to participate in bringing to fulfillment God's own handiwork, to give human labor its authentic meaning, and unite all things to the redemptive sacrifice of Christ.

For those of you who have written the names of friends, family, issues, fears, and so on in our *Book of Prayer Intentions*, you know the meaning of the Holy Father's words as the book is brought to the altar. To quote the opening lines of the Vatican II *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, the book brings up ‘the joy and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of our world, of our families, of our parish, of our hearts. As a priestly people, we are called upon to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to the Father (Romans 12:1; I Peter 2:5). These offerings are our prayers for the life of the world, united to the sacrifice of Christ.

Know the presence of this book on the stand in front of our baptismal pool. Use the book as a priestly person, to lift up those who are in need (as we so often pray on Sundays in our “Prayers of the Faithful”). In this way we can share spiritually in our love of and ministry to one another. Knowing that your intentions are being brought forward along with the bread and wine, the collection and the Elijah Cup, can help you to focus your prayer as the great prayer of offering, the Eucharistic Prayer, is prayed.

May we all be priests in the order of Melchizedek in this way, every Sunday!