

7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter 2011  
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When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying. The upper room. The cenacle. In the upper room at the last supper, the disciples of Jesus were fed and nourished with his sacrificial love. This is my body given for you. This is the cup of my blood, poured out for you. In the upper room at Easter, the disciples of Jesus receive his peace and his forgiveness. In the upper room at Pentecost, this disparate group of men and women, along with Mary the Mother of Jesus will receive a Spirit that will transform them into the Body and Blood of Christ in the world. As Jesus says in today's Gospel: "Now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world while I am coming to you."

Today I'm thinking about another Upper Room. We sometimes call it the attic. For most of us an attic is a storage place and sometimes a "storehouse of memories." A trip to the attic usually means dusting off old memorabilia and remembering. Usually if something is stored in the attic, you just don't want to give it away. When you go rummaging around your attic, sometimes you are surprised at what you have forgotten. You might even say, "Why is this up here? I can use it now."

I think the reason that this other Upper Room, the attic, is on my mind is that this past week, on the feast of the Visitation, I made a visit to my mother in New York. My brother strongly suggested that I make the trip. My mother, a usually vibrant and vivacious almost 96 year old, had almost suddenly lost her memory. She no longer knew where she was. She had lost all sense of "place." Her sense of time has been somewhat tenuous for the past years but a sense of place was there. She knew who she was and where she was and she knew her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday was June 27<sup>th</sup>. When I saw her, I couldn't believe how she had aged. She looked at me and you

could almost see her rummaging in her attic, in the storehouse of her mind, and somehow found the memory. You're my Bob, she said. I can't imagine I'll ever hear her say those words again but I certainly never will forget them. The uppermost room in the house. The attic. A place that stirs your memory.

Sometimes when we come to this holy place to celebrate Eucharist, it may feel like a trip to the attic. We are rummaging through 2000 years of the collective memory of our church. We are bringing to the forefront of our consciousness the memories of events that formed and shaped the church centuries ago and continue to do so today as we gather. Sometimes we lose a sense of place and time and have to really struggle to remember the power and meaning of what we are doing. Our coming to church for Sunday Eucharist can be experienced as something from the distant past or something we "have" to do rather than an experience of God's abundant spirit being poured into our hearts as healing, forgiving, nourishing, life giving grace in memory of Jesus.

That is why we need to ascend to the upper room of our minds and hearts and join in prayer. We are invited each week to have our memory of God's faithfulness "stirred up." We need to be reminded of those three life-changing events that took place in the upper room. The gift of the body and blood of Christ. The gift of fearlessness in the face of death. The gift of the spirit recreating, reforming a people as God's sons and daughters.

Next week, Pentecost Sunday, we celebrate who we are as God's people as we remember the outpouring of God's spirit. Perhaps a trip to the attic, the storehouse of memory, might be in order so that we can gather round the table of the Lord, remembering God's power, God's mercy, God's dynamic living spirit moving in us, recreating us, bringing us again to new life.