



St Luke's in the City

150 years - 2009

# Celebrating at the Crossroads

## Feast of Francis

5 October 2008

### THANKSGIVING

There's hardly any need to speak about budgets and all the usual financial needs and constraints of financing a parish community. We all know that our financial contributions pay the bills, and that it's our responsibility to pay for the costs of the mission of the church at these particular crossroads. Nor is there any need to spell out what needs doing around here in practical ways. All that information is readily available, week-by-week in the newsletter's regular appeals, in the budget presented and the 13 motions passed at the AGM last April, and in the ThanksGiving 2008 brochure distributed today.

We also know that the primary reason for giving is not to finance a budget, nor to fill rosters. Rather, we are invited to offer these signs of ourselves at the Altar on ThanksGiving Sunday because *we have a need to give*, because we need to respond to the Love who first loved us.

At the heart of what we do - in faithfulness to Jesus' command to "Do this..." - is give thanks for our vocation, our calling as those baptised into the death and resurrection of Christ. We give thanks for the mysterious and extraordinary divine life coursing through our ordinary human veins. We give thanks that we are intimately involved, in communion, with each other, with God, and the whole creation. We give thanks that we "who all share in the one bread" are, miraculously, *really* the Body of Christ - even though we find that very difficult to actually accept! We give thanks that at this Table of Christ's sacrificial human-divine loving we are becoming, as St Augustine said, what we eat and drink. As the prayer over the cup puts it: "By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity." In the tenth century Symeon the New Theologian wrote:

*My blood has been mingled with your Blood,  
And I know that I have been united to your Godhead.  
I have become your most pure Body;  
A member dazzling, a member truly sanctified,  
A member glorious, transparent, luminous;...  
What I was once, what have I now become!*

This is the εὐαγγέλιον *evangellion*, the good news. As the surprised recipients of such an exquisite gift, what else is there to do but offer all that we have, and all that we are! In the words of the post-communion prayer: "We offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice..."

Fr David