

17. The Mass - Eucharist

The Eucharist is both a sacrifice and a meal. We believe in the real presence of Jesus, who died for our sins. As we receive Christ's Body and Blood, we also are nourished spiritually and brought closer to God.

Key terms:

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| Accidents: | The appearance or physical properties of a given substance such as its colour, texture, odour, taste, quality or quantity, whose nature it is to exist in another. |
| Consecrate: | 1) To make holy or set apart for God; 2) through a priest praying the words Jesus said at the Last supper and the power of the Holy Spirit, to change bread and wine into Jesus' Body and Blood. |
| In persona Christi: | A priest acts only by the power of Christ acting through him when the priest is celebrating the sacraments. |
| Mystery: | 1) A truth of faith that we could not know unless God revealed it; once it is known, it is understandable and reasonable, but is never fully comprehensible; 2) truths that surpass reason's powers and can only be shown to be non-contradictory. |
| Eucharist: | The Eucharist (from the Greek eucharistia for "thanksgiving") is the very sacrifice of the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus which he instituted to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until his return in glory. |
| Holy Communion: | the practice of receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist – the Real Presence of Jesus Christ, body and blood, under the appearance of bread and wine. |
| Transubstantiation: | A change in the underlying nature of a thing, without a change in its accidents. |
| Sacrament: | An efficacious sign of grace instituted by Christ and administered by the Church that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, imparts divine life. |
| Sacrifice of the Mass: | The re-presentation of the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus. |
| Sacrilege: | The profaning or irreverence toward God or a sacred person or thing. |

THE MEANING OF THE EUCHARIST (1 Cor 11:23-29)

- The Scriptural sense of "remembrance" is a re-presentation, not just a memorial.
- The Eucharist is the same Jesus who gave his Body and Blood on the cross, ever present to the Father as the perfect lamb of sacrifice slain for our sins, made present at each Mass (Rev. 5:1-14).

- Christ is not sacrificed again at the Mass; we participate in the one single sacrifice of Calvary, ever-present in eternity, made present to us in time through the priesthood by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- The Eucharist is God's sacrament of love: what was bread and wine becomes the living Christ.
- The Eucharist is the highest form of sacrifice, praise, and thanksgiving to the Father.
- The Eucharist is our Paschal Banquet and a foretaste of the Heavenly Banquet (Rev. 19:9).
- The Eucharist is to be worshipped and adored.

THE FATHER'S PLAN (Gen. 3:15)

- In his never-ending love, God the Father always intended to save us through Jesus Christ.
- The Old Testament prefigures and prepares the way for the Eucharist, the fullest gift of God's life to us
 - The Passover lamb (Ex. 12:1-20)
 - Feeding the Israelites with manna from Heaven in the desert (Ex. 16:2-16).

NEW TESTAMENT EUCHARISTIC MEALS

- Feeding of the 5,000 (Mk. 6:41; Mt. 14:19; Lk. 9:16; Jn. 6:11)
- Feeding of the 4,000 (Mk. 8:6; Mt. 15:36)
- The Last Supper (Mk. 14:22-24; Mt. 26:26-28; Lk. 22:17, 19-20; 1Cor 11:23-26)
- Post-Resurrection 'breakfast' (Jn. 21:1-14)
- The Supper at Emmaus (Lk. 24:30-31, 33,35)
- The "Breaking of Bread" (1 Cor 10:16-17; Acts 2:42,46)

THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST, THE TRUE FLESH AND BLOOD OF JESUS

(Jn. 6:25-58)

- Jesus taught that we must eat his flesh and drink his blood if we are to have everlasting life.
- Jesus' hearers clearly understood that he was speaking literally, not figuratively (Jn. 6:60-69)
- Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper
 - Jesus, who as God is not subject to time and space, did this in advance of his death.
 - He commanded that his apostles celebrate the Eucharist as a memorial of him.
- Scripture records the early community's belief in Jesus' true presence in the Eucharist (1Cor 11:23-27).

HOW IS THE EUCHARIST CELEBRATED? (Lk. 22:14-20)

- Nothing is impossible to God (Ps. 115:3; Lk. 1:37)
- In the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine changes, but the accidents do not change
 - The consecrated bread and wine look, smell, and taste the same as before.
 - "Transubstantiation" is the term the Church gives to this change in substance.
- The eyes see bread and wine; the eyes of faith see the reality: Jesus' Body and Blood.
- The priest calls upon the power of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic Prayer.
- The priest is not acting from his own power, but *in persona Christi*.

- The priest says the words of consecration: “This is my body” and “This is my blood”.
- Jesus is entirely present-
 - In both the consecrated bread and consecrated wine.
 - In each fragment of the consecrated bread and in each drop of the consecrated wine.
- The Eucharist remains so long as the consecrated bread and wine are intact.
- Receiving the Eucharist provides to each believer the greatest means of grace for growth in holiness.

SAINTS OF THE EUCHARIST

Resources on Eucharistic Saints:

<https://catholicexchange.com/six-saints-devotion-to-the-eucharist/>

<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=6313>

<https://www.thepriest.com/2022/04/18/eucharistic-saints/>

St. Tarcisius

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

St. Thoma Aquinas

St. Dominic

St. Peter Julian Eymard

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

St. Therese of Lisieux

St. Teresa of Avila

St. John Paul II

St. Alphonsus Liguori

St. Francisco Marto

St. Teresa of Calcutta

St. Claire

Blessed Carlo Acutis

EUCHARISTIC MIRACLES

Eucharistic miracles are extraordinary events, where the Eucharist no longer appears under the form of bread and wine, but takes on the biological qualities of human flesh or blood or both.

These miracles have no scientific explanation but can be scientifically verified, and help us go beyond the visible and perceptible to the existence of something beyond, or even supernatural.

Resources on Eucharistic Miracles:

<https://www.churchpop.com/2015/06/28/5-extraordinary-eucharistic-miracles-with-pictures/>

<http://www.miracolieucaistici.org/en/liste/list.html>

<http://www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/mir/a3.html>

<https://www.ncregister.com/blog/five-eucharistic-miracles>

- Miracle of Lanciano – 8th Century
- The Corporal of Bolsena – 13th Century
- The Hosts of Siena, Italy – 18th Century
- The Miracle of Chirattakonam, India – 21st Century
- The Eucharistic Miracle of Santarém – 13th Century

EXPLORE!

Explore with the candidates the various ways in which to receive Holy Communion and the disposition required for receiving.

Explore the devotion of Eucharistic Adoration with the candidates and how to pray before the Eucharistic Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

HOW TO RECEIVE THE LORD IN HOLY COMMUNION

- To avoid sacrilege, we must be in a state of grace (free from serious sin) and repent of any venial sins (1 Cor 11:27-29).
 - Reception should be preceded by a one-hour fast from food and drink.
 - When receiving, make an act of reverence and respond to the minister with “Amen” – an act of faith in the Real Presence.
 - After receiving, make an act of thanksgiving to your Saviour who now abides in you.
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THE STRUCTURE OF THE MASS AND ITS FOUNDATIONS IN THE SCRIPTURES

Gathering *Ps. 149:1; Joel 2:15-17; Is. 48:14; Mt. 18:20; Acts 2:1-13*

Introductory Rite

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| Greeting | The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.... 2Cor 13:3 The Lord be with you Ruth 2:4; Lk. 1:28 |
| Confession & Forgiveness | 1 John 1:8-9 |
| Kyrie | Lk. 17:13 |
| Hymn of Praise – Glory to God | Luke 2:14 |
| Hymn of Praise – This is the Feast | Rev. 5:13 |

Liturgy of the Word

Mt. 4:4; Jn. 1:1-5; Col 3:16; 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:1-5.

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| First Reading | Hebrew Scriptures (Acts of the Apostles during Easter) |
| Responsorial Psalm | Psalmody |
| Second Reading | New Testament Epistles |
| Gospel Acclamation | Jn. 6:68 (The Words of Eternal Life) Lent – Deut. 30:2; Num 14:18; Joel 2:13 |
| Gospel | The Gospels |
| Intercessions | 1 Tim 2:1-2 |

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Jn. 6:48-5-; Acts 2:42

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| Offertory | Ps. 51:10-12; Ps. 116:10-17 |
| Sanctus – Holy, holy | Is. 6:3; Matt. 21:9 |
| Words of Institution | 1 Cor 11:23-26 |
| Lord’s Prayer | Mt. 6:9-13 |
| Greeting of Peace | Mt. 5:23-24; Jn. 14:27; Rom 16:16 |
| Lamb of God | Jn. 1:29 |

Concluding Rite

Mt. 28:19; Jn. 20:21

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| Benediction | Num. 6:23-26 |
| Dismissal | Lk. 7:50 |

SACRED VESSELS & THE LITURGICAL SPACE

Sanctuary

Altar

Tabernacle

Ambo

Presider's Chair

Vessels

Chalice

Paten

Corporal

Purificator

Cruets

Missal & Lectionary

The Mass - Eucharist— Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. How is Jesus present in the Eucharist? By what power is Jesus' Real Presence made possible?
2. How does the Eucharist show the love of the Father and of Christ?
3. Why does the Church teach that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life and our faith?
4. How is the Eucharist the "sacrificial memorial" of Christ? How is the Eucharist a foretaste of the Heavenly Banquet?
5. What do you think about the idea that the Mass is a Sacrifice that unites us with the Cross of Jesus? What difference could it make to your life and faith?
6. What does it mean to say that the Eucharist should be received worthily by the faithful?
7. The word "Mass" is derived from the closing words "*Ite, missa est*" ("go, you are sent"). What are we sent to do?
8. How is the Eucharist essential to the Father's plan to give us the gift of hope?

PRAYER

Adoro Te Devote (See Appendix)

Come, Adore this Wonderous Presence (See Appendix)

or

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| Gospel Reflection: | Year A | Matt. 5:17-37 |
| | Year B | Mk. 1:40-45 |
| | Year C | Lk. 6:17, 20-26 |

The following format will be used for all Gospel reflections:

- Read the text aloud.
- Pause for a minute's silence.
- Read the text aloud again.
- Ask everyone to pick a word or a phrase that struck them. They just say the word or phrase without comment or discussion.
- Read the text again.
- Ask those present to comment on their word or phrase. What struck them about it? Why/how is it speaking to them?
- Continue with the discussion.

The following questions may be helpful:

What does this mean to me?

How does it make me feel?

Did I find the text disturbing/hopeful/confusing?

What images of God emerge for me?

What do I think that God is saying in this text?

What impact does this have on my life?

Scripture and Catechism Resources

The Mass - Eucharist

Scripture

- Gen. 1:1-31 God in his almighty power creates everything that exists by his command.
- Gen. 14:18-20 Melchizedek, priest-king of Salem, offers bread and wine as thanksgiving.
- Ex. 12:1-20 God prescribes the Passover ritual, centred on killing and eating a perfect lamb.
- Ex. 16:2-16 God miraculously feeds the Israelites in the desert with manna and quail.
- Mt. 28:20 Jesus will remain with the Church always.
- Lk. 22:14-20 Jesus changes bread and wine into his Body and Blood as the New Covenant between God and is people, and commands that his apostles celebrate the Eucharist in remembrance of him.
- Lk. 24:13-35 Two disciples recognise the resurrected Jesus in the breaking of the bread.
- Jn. 1:29 John the Baptist points to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes the world's sin away.
- Jn. 2:1-11 Jesus changes water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana.
- Jn. 6:1-14 Jesus feeds the multitude.
- Jn. 6:56 Those who eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood live in him and he lives in them.
- Jn. 6: 25-58 Jesus' Bread of Life discourse.
- Jn. 6:66-69 Many of Jesus' disciples leave, unable to accept what he has said about eating his flesh and drinking his blood; Peter speaks for the apostles in declaring his faith.
- Acts 2:42 The growing body of Christians celebrated the Eucharist together.
- Acts 20:7 Paul and his companions celebrate the Eucharist on the first day of the week.
- 1 Cor 10:16-17 The consecrated wine and bread are our participation in Jesus' Body and Blood.
- 1 Cor 11:23-29 The institution and meaning of the Eucharist; the gravity of unworthy reception.
- Heb. 9:1-15 Christ's bloody sacrifice fulfils all the liturgies of the Old Testament.
- Heb. 10:10 We have been made holy by the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus.
- 1 Jn. 2:2 Jesus Christ is the expiation for the sins of everyone.
- Rev. 5:1-14 Jesus, the true and final sacrifice, is ever present as a slain lamb before the throne of the Father.
- Rev. 19:9 In Heaven, we are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Catechism

- 1322 The Eucharist is the completion of our initiation as Christians.
- 1323 Jesus instituted the Eucharist as a perpetual gift to his Church.
- 1324-1327 The Eucharist contains Christ, is the sign and cause of the Church's union with him, and is our foretaste of the Heavenly liturgy and life there with God.
- 1328-1332 The various names of the Eucharist that identify its various aspects.
- 1333-1334 Bread and wine are Old Testament prefigurements of the Eucharist.
- 1335 Jesus' feeding of the multitude and changing water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana are prefigurements of the superabundance of the Eucharist.
- 1336 The Eucharist either scandalises us or demands our faith.
- 1337-1341 Jesus institutes the Eucharist, gives the Passover its true meaning, and commands that the apostles celebrate the Eucharist until he comes again.
- 1342-1355 The Church has always celebrated the Eucharist in the liturgy of the Mass.
- 1356-1372 The Eucharist as sacrificial memorial, thanksgiving, and praise.
- 1373-1377 Jesus becomes truly and substantially present in the Eucharist through the power of the Holy Spirit when the priest consecrates the bread and wine.

- 1378-1381 The Eucharist is to be worshipped as truly Jesus.
- 1382-1390 As the Paschal Banquet, the Eucharist is to be received worthily by the faithful.
- 1391-1405 The fruits of the Eucharist and its expression of Christian unity.

(Source: Adapted from RCIA Catechist's Manual, Association for Catechumenal Ministry, Maryland, 2007)

APPENDIX

ADORO TE DEVOTE

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

Godhead here in hiding, whom I do adore,
Masked by these bare shadows, shape and nothing more,
See, Lord, at Thy service low lies here a heart
Lost, all lost in wonder at the God thou art.

Seeing, touching, tasting are in thee deceived:
How says trusty hearing? that shall be believed;
What God's Son has told me, take for truth I do;
Truth Himself speaks truly or there's nothing true.

On the cross Thy godhead made no sign to men,
Here Thy very manhood steals from human ken:
Both are my confession, both are my belief,
And I pray the prayer of the dying thief.

I am not like Thomas, wounds I cannot see,
But can plainly call thee Lord and God as he;
Let me to a deeper faith daily nearer move,
Daily make me harder hope and dearer love.

O thou our reminder of Christ crucified,
Living Bread, the life of us for whom he died,
Lend this life to me then: feed and feast my mind,
There be thou the sweetness man was meant to find.

Bring the tender tale true of the Pelican;
Bathe me, Jesu Lord, in what Thy bosom ran
Blood whereof a single drop has power to win
All the world forgiveness of its world of sin.

Jesu, whom I look at shrouded here below,
I beseech thee send me what I thirst for so,
Some day to gaze on thee face to face in light
And be blest for ever with Thy glory's sight. Amen.

COME, ADORE THIS WONDROUS PRESENCE

T. James Quinn

Come, adore this wondrous presence,
bow to Christ, the source of grace.
Here is kept the ancient promise
of God's earthly dwelling-place.
Sight is blind before God's glory,
faith alone may see his face.

Glory be to God the Father,
praise to his co-equal Son,
adoration to the Spirit,
bond of love, in Godhead one.
Blest be God by all creation
joyously while ages run. Amen.