

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you willed to give us your Body and Blood as a memorial of your suffering and death and an opportunity for you to continue to be with us. We ask you to create a hunger in our hearts that we might desire to receive you so that we may bring your life into the world. We ask this in your most holy Name. Amen.

Scripture Reading *John 6:48-58*

In the Bread of Life Discourse, Jesus tells the crowds that unless we eat his flesh and drink his blood, we do not have eternal life. This passage is one of the most definitive statements from Jesus regarding the Eucharist actually being His Body and Blood, not just a representation or a memorial meal. The Eucharist is Jesus Himself offered to us.

What is the Eucharist?

- **The Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ.**
- We call the mystery of bread and wine becoming the Body and Blood of Christ **transubstantiation**.
- **Eucharist** literally means “thanksgiving.”
- The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.” The other sacraments... are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. (CCC 1324)
- Christ instituted the Eucharist at His Last Supper.
- The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ’s Passover, that is, of the work of salvation accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, a work made present by liturgical action. (CCC 1409)
- The sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated through the celebration of the Eucharist.

How is the Eucharist a Meal?

- Jesus intended that the Eucharist be celebrated as a meal.
- We share food and drink (bread and wine) around a table (the altar).
- The essential signs of the Eucharistic sacrament are wheat bread and grape wine, on which the blessing of the Holy Spirit is invoked and the priest pronounces the words of the consecration spoken by Jesus during the Last Supper. (CCC 1412)

Incarnating THE KERYGMA EUCHARIST

How is the Eucharist a Sacrifice?

- **Sacrifice:** to make holy (Latin: *sacra facere*)
- It is Christ himself, the eternal high priest of the New Covenant who, acting through the ministry of the priests, offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. And it is the same Christ, really present under the species of bread and wine, who is offering is the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice. (CCC 1410)
- The Eucharist is perpetually connected with the sacrifice on Calvary as one event. (Paschal Mystery)
- Through the Eucharist, we join ourselves to the one eternal moment when Christ sacrificed his life for all. We join ourselves in that sacrifice.
- We call the table on which we celebrate the Eucharist an “**altar**” because it is a sacrifice.

What is meant by the Eucharist as a Mystical Communion?

- Whenever and wherever the Eucharist is celebrated, all Christians, living and dead, are united to one another.
- In the Eucharistic Prayer, we pray for those who are united to the Church, specifically the communion of saints. By calling those to mind (anamnesis), they are joined together with us during the celebration.

How is the Eucharist a symbol of Catholic Unity?

- In ancient times, no one would be admitted to the Eucharistic celebration unless he or she were baptized.
- We do not have “open communion” in our Church because we offer ourselves with Christ on the altar, making us united with all who are gathered.
- During the Eucharistic prayer, we pray for the pope and local bishop those who are united with us in faith.

How is the Eucharist Fuel for Service?

- The word “**mass**” comes from the Latin word “*missa*” which means “to send forth.”
- Through the Eucharist, we become sharers in the mission of Christ to bring the Gospel to all.
- We sacrifice ourselves in the Eucharist and accordingly should live out our lives in that manner.

EUCCHARIST



How is the Eucharist the Healing Touch of God?

- The Eucharist increases the communicant's union with the Lord, forgives his venial sins, and preserves him from grave sins. Since receiving this sacrament strengthens the bonds of charity between the communicant and Christ, it also reinforces the unity of the Church. (CCC 1416)
- The medieval Church understood the Eucharist as a sort of "divine medicine."
- The Eucharist can bring us peace with the comforting touch of Christ.
- If we give ourselves to the Lord fully, the Lord gives himself to us fully in the Eucharist. "Our hearts are restless until they find rest in Him."
- **Viaticum**: literally, "with you on the journey." This is the Eucharist given to someone who is receiving the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.
- Our **Reception of Communion** is another sign of unity.

How is the Eucharist a Process for Divinization?

- Through the Eucharist, we grow in holiness because the very life of God is within us.
- God became human, so that we may become divine – The Eucharist is a foretaste of that divinization.
- Through the Eucharist, we are transformed into other Christs (that is why we are called Christians).

How is the Eucharist a Focus for Adoration?

- The Eucharist is the Real Presence of Jesus in our midst.
- Through the Eucharist, we encounter the Lord directly – a deeper reality than if he stood next to us, because in the Eucharist, we are participants in His reality.
- We will never fully understand how bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ but it is through faith that we are positive that the Lord is here among us.