

Session 2



THE EUCHARIST

SOURCE & SUMMIT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

It has been said that the Eucharist is not a “what,” but a “who.”

At the very center of the Catholic faith is the belief that the Eucharist is not merely a symbol of Jesus or a reminder of Jesus. No, the Eucharist is much more than that. At Mass, the bread and wine on the altar are actually changed into the very Body and Blood of Jesus. When we receive the Eucharist, therefore, we are united with Jesus himself in the most intimate way possible here on earth. The almighty God, Creator of the universe, humbles himself so that he can become one with each of us. God is within us, within our very souls, each time we attend Mass and receive communion. What an amazing gift the Eucharist is!

But how can this be? Is Jesus really present in the Eucharist? Is the Eucharist *really* a “who”—the real presence of Jesus among us? The Eucharist at Mass doesn’t look like flesh and blood. The Eucharist looks like bread and wine—how can Catholicism claim that it’s Jesus’ Body and Blood? These are some of the questions we will consider in this week’s session.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **How we know Jesus was speaking literally and not figuratively when he said to eat his body and drink his blood**
- **How the Eucharist can really be Jesus’ body and blood when it still looks like bread and wine**
- **What Catholics mean when they say the Mass is a holy “sacrifice”**
- **How Jesus longs to be united with us in Holy Communion**

OPENING PRAYER

Soul of Christ, be my sanctification;
 Body of Christ, be my salvation;
 Blood of Christ, fill all my veins;
 Water of Christ's side, wash out my stains;
 Passion of Christ, my comfort be;
 O good Jesus, listen to me;
 In Thy wounds I fain would hide;
 Ne'er to be parted from Thy side;
 Guard me, should the foe assail me;
 Call me when my life shall fail me;
 Bid me come to Thee above,
 With Thy saints to sing Thy love,
 World without end. Amen.

—Prayer known as the Anima Christi

“This food is known among us as the Eucharist. We do not receive these things as common bread and common drink but as Jesus Christ, our Savior, being made flesh by the word of God.”
 —St. Justin Martyr, 2nd century

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Let's begin with a quick review. First, what does the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist mean? Second, how would you explain to someone how what looks and tastes like bread and wine really is Christ's body and blood?

2. What is the relationship between the Eucharist and the Jewish feast of Passover? How might the Passover background shed light on the need to receive Jesus in Holy Communion? How might the Passover background shed light on the Mass as sacrifice?

3. How can the Eucharist be a true sacrifice when Jesus is no longer dying on the cross, but has been raised from the dead and is seated in heaven?

CALL TO CONVERSION

After spending a few moments in prayer, write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:



#1 When you consider that the Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of our Lord, how does that change or deepen your appreciation for the Mass? If you have already received your first communion, how can you show your love for Jesus, truly present in the Eucharist, more fully and completely?

#2 In the video, we learned some ways to build a closer relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist, including visiting him at a Eucharistic Adoration chapel, spending a few minutes after Mass in thanksgiving, and attending daily Mass. What is one way that you could begin to spend more time with Jesus this week?

#3 Reflect on the following quote from St. Thérèse of Lisieux:

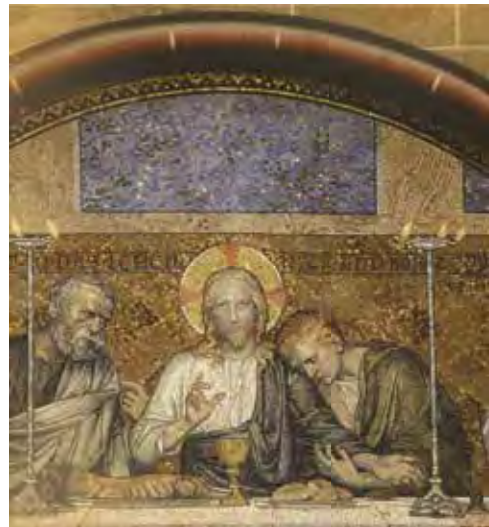
*“Do you realize that Jesus is there in the tabernacle expressly for you—
for you alone? He burns with the desire to come into your heart...go
without fear to receive the Jesus of peace and love...”*

When you read that Jesus is waiting for you alone, what thoughts
come to mind? How can you best respond to this invitation of love?
What fears or concerns are holding you back? Can you let them go
and “receive the Jesus of peace and love”?



CLOSING PRAYER

May the partaking of your Holy Mysteries, O Lord,
be not for my judgment or condemnation,
but for the healing of soul and body.
O Lord, I also believe and profess
that this (which I am about to receive)
is truly your most precious Body
and your life-giving Blood,
which, I pray, make me worthy to receive
for the remission of all my sins
and for life everlasting. Amen.
—From the Byzantine Liturgy



SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Here is a verse from the Bible that you can memorize and reflect on this week to help you apply today's session to your daily life:



“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” —Corinthians 11:26

MEET JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST!

Visit www.SymbolonCatholic.org

To help answer your questions and enrich your faith, visit our website to discover additional online resources from throughout the Catholic world.

For Further Reading:

For more in-depth reading about the Eucharist, see the following *Catechism* passages:

- *The Names of the Sacrament: CCC 1328-1332*
- *Bread and Wine; Body and Blood: CCC 1333ff*
- *Institution of the Eucharist: CCC 1337-1344*
- *Sacramental Sacrifice: CCC 1357-1368*
- *Transubstantiation: CCC 1376-1377*

Other Resources:

- *The United States Catechism for Adults Chapter 17*
- *God Is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*
by **Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger**