

Living in the Kingdom

Lesson 16: The Eucharist

Source and Summit of the Christian Life



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| CCC 1323 | 1. <i>To perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages and to make it possible for us to grow in Trinitarian life unto sanctity, Christ provided himself as nourishment, presence and pledge of future glory.</i> |
| CCC 1323-26 | 2. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. It is a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us. In the Eucharistic celebration we unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy and anticipate eternal life. |
| CCC 1328-32 | 3. The different names of the sacrament: Eucharist; the Lord's Supper; the Breaking of Bread; the memorial of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection; the Holy Sacrifice; the Holy and Divine Liturgy; the Most Blessed Sacrament; Holy Communion; Holy Mass. |
| <p>The Eucharist in Salvation History</p> <p>CCC 1333 Gen 14:18 Heb 6:20</p> <p>Ex 12:14</p> | <p>4. Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine to Abraham is a prefiguring of the Church's offering of bread and wine that become Christ's Body and blood. Christ is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek.</p> <p>5. The Passover: Every Israelite family killed a lamb without blemish and put its blood on the doorposts, which protected the firstborn sons from death after they had <i>eaten the lamb</i>. The Passover happened only once, but the memorial sacrifice was to be repeated perpetually.</p> |
| CCC 1334 | 6. The unleavened bread that the Jews eat at Passover commemorates the haste of the departure from Egypt. The cup of Blessing adds to the festive joy of wine an eschatological dimension: the Messianic expectation of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Every Jew is to celebrate the Passover today as if God took <i>him</i> personally out of Egypt. |
| Deut 8:3 | 7. During the Exodus God provided for the Israelites in the desert, sending them bread from heaven, the manna , which reminded them that they are to live by the bread of the Word of God. |
| Ps 50:13-15 Mal 1:11 | 8. At the time of the Davidic kingdom, the thank offering of unleavened bread and wine became the primary liturgy celebrated in the Temple. It was thought that when Messiah would come, no other sacrifice would be offered but the thank offering. |
| CCC 1335, Jn 2 | 9. In the fullness of time, Jesus came and began to preach the kingdom of God. At the wedding at Cana, the water turned into wine foreshadowed the wedding feast in the Father's kingdom, where the faithful will drink the new wine that has become the blood of Christ. |
| Mt 14:14, Jn 6:1-14 | 10. The multiplication of the loaves, when the Lord says the blessings, breaks and distributes the loaves through his disciples to feed the multitude, prefigure the superabundance of his Eucharist. |
| Jn 6:51-66 | 11. <i>"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."</i> |

CCC 1337,
Jn 13:1-17, 34-35

CCC 1339-40
Lk 22:7-20

CCC 1341-44
Acts 2:42-46

CCC 1357-58
CCC 1359-61

CCC 1362-67
CCC 1104

CCC 1368-71

Heb 9:26, 10:18
Rev 5:6, 13:8
1 Pet 1:20

CCC 1373
Mt 26:26-27
Jn 6:53-55
1 Cor 11:27-29

CCC 1376
CCC 1411

12. At the Last Supper, Jesus washed the feet of his apostles and gave them the commandment of love. He instituted the Eucharist as a memorial of his death and resurrection, and commanded his apostles to celebrate it until his return, as priests of the New Testament.
13. Jesus' death and resurrection, the new Passover, is anticipated in the Last Supper, which fulfills the Jewish Passover and anticipates the final Passover of the Church in the glory of the kingdom.
14. The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, celebrated especially on the first day of the week. At every celebration of the Eucharist, the people of God advance toward the heavenly banquet, when all the elect will be seated at the table of the kingdom.

The Sacramental Sacrifice: Thanksgiving, Memorial, Presence

15. The Eucharist is a **sacrifice of praise** and thanksgiving to the Father for the work of creation, redemption, and sanctification.
16. The Eucharist is the **memorial of Christ's Passover** - a sacrifice which makes the sacrifice of the cross present in the liturgy, where the work of our redemption is continually carried out. The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice. When we celebrate Mass, we are at the foot of the cross.
17. The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the Church, the body of Christ which participates in the offering of her head. The whole Church is united with the offering and intercession of Christ: pope, bishops, priests, deacons, community - with also the saints in heaven, and praying for those in purgatory.
18. How can the Mass be a perpetual sacrifice? Was Christ's sacrifice at the cross not sufficient? Is Jesus re-sacrificed again and again? No. Christ's sacrifice is final and complete, but it is outside of time and eternal. The Eucharist makes it present to our lives today.
19. The **Real Presence**: In the Eucharist the body and blood, the soul and divinity of Christ, and therefore the whole Christ is truly, really and substantially contained. This has been believed since the earliest times (Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, [110-180 A.D.]).

"I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David; and for drink I desire his blood, which is love incorruptible." (Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Romans 7:3 [A.D. 110])

20. **Transubstantiation**: by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the body of Christ and of the whole substance of the wine into his blood. Only validly ordained priests can preside at the Eucharist and consecrate the bread and the wine so that they become the body and blood of Jesus.

"It is not man that causes the things offered to become the Body and Blood of Christ, but he who was crucified for us, Christ himself. The priest, in the role of Christ, pronounces these words, but their power and grace are God's. This is my body, he says. This word transforms the things offered." (St. John Chrysostom, cf. CCC 1375)

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| <p>Rev 11:19-12:2</p> <p>CCC 1378-81</p> <p>CCC 1382-83, 90</p> <p><i>"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."</i></p> <p>Col 1:24, 2 Pet 1:4</p> <p>CCC 1385-86 Mt 8:8 1 Cor 11:27-29</p> <p>CCC 1388-89</p> <p>CCC 1391-97 1 Cor 10:16-17</p> <p>CCC 1399-1401</p> <p>CCC 1090, 1402-1405</p> | <p>21. In the Holy of Holies: The Ark of the Covenant contained the tablets of the law, the manna, and Aaron's rod symbolizing the priesthood. Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant, carried in her womb Jesus, the eternal Word of God, the Bread of Life, and the great High Priest.</p> <p>22. We express our faith in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist by genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. In his Eucharistic presence Jesus remains mysteriously in our midst, and it is fitting to spend time with Him in loving worship and adoration.</p> <p>23. The Mass is the sacred banquet of communion with the Lord's body and blood. To receive communion is to receive Christ Himself who has offered himself for us. The sign of communion is more complete under both kinds; but communion under the species of bread alone is enough to receive all the fruit of Eucharistic grace.</p> <p>24. At Mass we offer our lives as a sacrifice and receive His in exchange. Our sacrifice is united to His. We enter the Holy of Holies. It is the union between bridegroom and bride, an exchange between the human and the divine where we partake of the divine nature.</p> <p>25. We must prepare ourselves for this great moment by <u>fasting for one hour</u> before communion. Receiving communion in a state of grave sin brings not salvation but condemnation, and so must examine our conscience. If conscious of a grave sin, we must receive the sacrament of reconciliation before coming to communion.</p> <p>26. The Church <u>obliges the faithful to attend Mass on Sundays</u> and feast days and to receive the Eucharist at least once a year. But we should receive Holy Eucharist as often as possible, even daily.</p> <p>27. The fruits of Holy Communion: Augments our union with Christ; separates us from sin; wipes away venial sins; preserves us from future mortal sins; strengthens the unity of the Church; commits us to the poor.</p> <p>28. The Eucharist and the Unity of Christians: The Eucharist is a sign of unity and bond of charity. Orthodox churches have a valid priesthood and Eucharist; intercommunion with them is possible and even encouraged. Protestant and Messianic communities do not have a valid priesthood and Eucharist, and so intercommunion with them is normally not possible.</p> <p>29. The Mass transcends time and space, bringing us both to the foot of the cross and into heaven. The Eucharist is an anticipation of heavenly glory. The liturgy is the intersection between earth and heaven, time and eternity.</p> <div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><i>"In the earthly liturgy we share a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle." (CCC 1090)</i></p> </div> |
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Questions for Discussion

1. How is the Eucharist prefigured in the Old Testament?
2. How is the Eucharist essential to the Father's plan to give us the gift of hope?
3. How does the Eucharist show the love of the Father and of Christ?
4. Why is the Eucharist more than a mental recollection of Christ's Passover? How does this bear on the way we attend Mass?
5. Do you find Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist difficult to accept? How does Sacred Scripture help?
6. Why is it so important to be in a state of grace before receiving the Eucharist? What happens if I receive the Eucharist in a state of serious sin?
7. Why does the Church require our presence at Mass every Sunday?
8. Why can Orthodox Christians receive the Eucharist with Catholics but not Protestants and Messianic Jews? What are they lacking? Do they have the Real Presence of Jesus in their own communities if they sincerely believe in it?
9. What fruit of the Eucharist should I hope to see in my life? How can it be that some Catholics frequently receive the Eucharist but don't seem to show any fruit from it?