



The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

Social Media Posts

“Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister...but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments...He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them’” -Vatican II

“Besides physical hunger, man experiences another hunger, a hunger that cannot be satiated with ordinary food. It’s a hunger for life, a hunger for love, a hunger for eternity. And the sign of manna — like the entire experience of Exodus — also contains in itself this dimension: it was the symbol of a food that satisfies this deep human hunger.” -Pope Francis

“Jesus gives us this food, rather, He himself is the living bread that gives life to the world. His Body is the true food in the form of bread; his Blood is the true drink in the form of wine. It isn’t simple nourishment to satisfy the body, like manna; the Body of Christ is the bread of the last times, capable of giving life, eternal life, because this bread is made of love.” -Pope Francis

“When the disciples on the way to Emmaus asked Jesus to stay ‘with’ them, he responded by giving them a much greater gift: through the Sacrament of the Eucharist he found a way to stay ‘in’ them. -Pope St. John Paul II

“Receiving the Eucharist means entering into a profound communion with Jesus. ‘Abide in me, and I in you’ (Jn 15:4). This relationship of profound and mutual ‘abiding’ enables us to have a certain foretaste of heaven on earth.” -Pope St. John Paul II

"Receiving the Eucharist means adoring him whom we receive. Only in this way do we become one with him, and are given, as it were, a foretaste of the beauty of the heavenly liturgy." -Pope Benedict XVI

"The personal relationship which the individual believer establishes with Jesus present in the Eucharist constantly points beyond itself to the whole communion of the Church and nourishes a fuller sense of membership in the Body of Christ." - Pope Benedict XVI

"Contemplation is a gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus. 'I look at him and he looks at me': this is what a certain peasant of Ars used to say to his holy curé [St. Jean Vianney] about his prayer before the tabernacle." -*Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Bulletin Articles

You Are What You Eat

Most of us remember from our childhood using this phrase in fun. However, this expression describes well our experience of Holy Communion. When we consume earthly food, it is absorbed into our system, digested, converted into energy or waste; our food becomes part of us. Yet when we receive Holy Communion, we become united with Jesus Christ so much that we truly become what we receive. Jesus became human so that we might become divine, and in the Eucharist, we truly gain a share in God's own life.

A Real Symbol

We believe that the Holy Eucharist is both real AND a symbol. Of course we believe that Jesus Christ – God's own Son – is *really and truly* present in the consecrated bread and wine. But this is also a *symbol*, pointing beyond our earthly experience towards a union with Christ that is impossible to explain this side of heaven. All sacraments are outward signs of an invisible grace, the working of God in our lives. This real symbol is an effective sign. This holy meal is truly a Communion with God.

Take and Drink

Catholics believe that we encounter God above all in sacramental signs. In Holy Communion, we share in God's own life through the sacrament of Jesus' own Body

and Blood. Even though we receive the “whole Christ” – body, blood, soul, and divinity – when we receive Communion under the form of bread alone, receiving Communion also from the chalice is a more complete participation in the Eucharist. In the sign of consecrated wine we see Jesus’ blood outpoured for us and are challenged to drink the common cup with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Christ Present in the Word

“It is truly Christ who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church,” teaches the Church. Since Vatican II, it is normal for a Liturgy of the Word to accompany the celebrations of sacraments. The Church has also strengthened the relationship of Word and Eucharist (made visible in the placing of the Book of the Gospels upon the altar), developing a 3-year cycle of readings to be used for Sunday Mass. The Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass sums it up in this way: “In the hearing of God’s word the Church is built up and grows...past works in the history of salvation are presented anew as mysterious realities.”

Christ Present in Bread and Wine

We believe that through the power of the Holy Spirit and the prayer of the Church, bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the priest, praying with and for the people, makes the sacrifice of the cross real again by taking the bread and wine, asking God to bless it, then breaking the bread, and sharing it. Just as the apostles ate and drank at the Last Supper, we all eat and drink to be nourished to continue Christ’s saving work in the world. The Eucharistic Prayer is the center and heart of the whole Mass, and in it, the Church gives thanks to God for the whole work of salvation.

Christ Present in Ministry

Among the many ways Christ is present at Mass is in the ministry of the ordained priest who leads the assembly in the celebration. Praying with and in the name of the community gathered, the priest acts in the person of Christ, the Head of the Church (*in persona Christi capitis ecclesiae*) in the celebration of the Eucharist. Each Mass is an action of the whole Church: hence included in every Eucharistic Prayer are prayers for the Church, for the pope, and for the local bishop. And, throughout the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest prays on behalf and as part of the community, in the plural person: “Let us give thanks...We come to you with praise

and thanksgiving..." Through the deacon and other ministers, we encounter Jesus Christ who came to serve.

Christ Present in the Church at Prayer

While Christ is truly present at Mass in the Word proclaimed, the Eucharistic bread and wine, and in the ministry of the priest, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of Vatican II affirmed that Christ is present "when the Church prays and sings, for he promised: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.'" Mass is not a "spectator sport", in which the priest performs and the people merely watch. The celebration of the Mass - Word and Eucharist - requires the participation of all the faithful because we are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." Through texts in the language of the people, music accessible to the assembly, and a fuller understanding of what we do, we are all called to engage fully each and every Sunday in this most holy liturgy.