

The Holy Eucharist

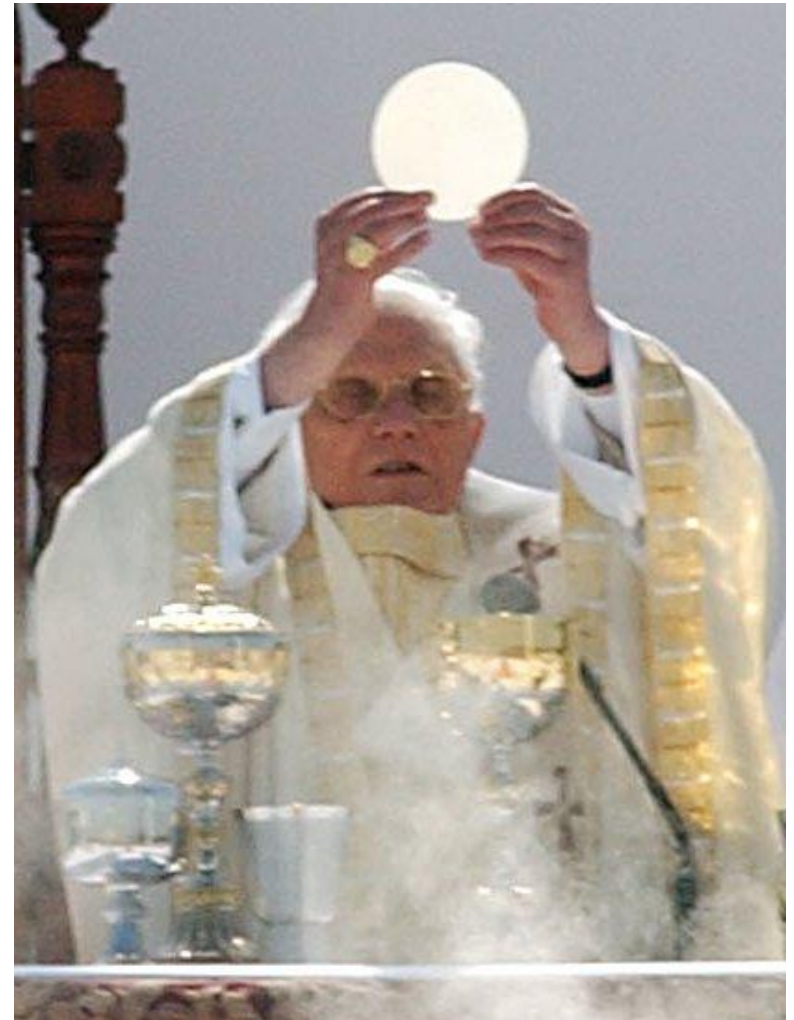


Catholicism 101 (RCIA)

2011-12

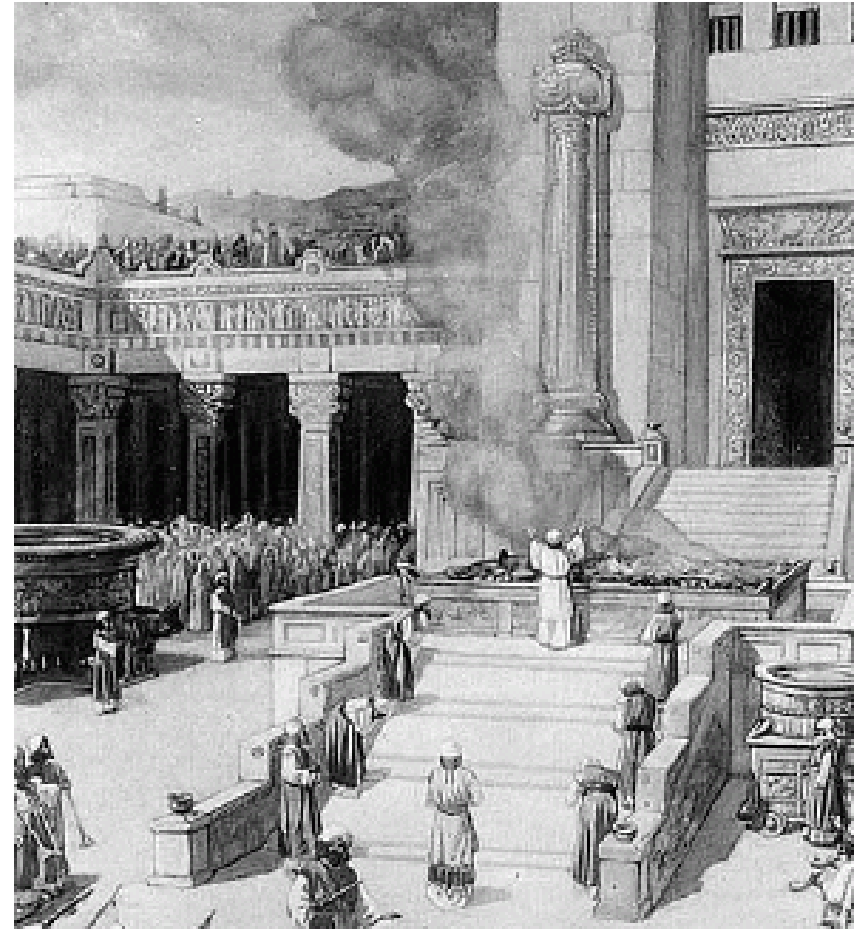
Names for the Eucharist

- **The Eucharist** – comes from the Greek word *eucharistia* which means “thanksgiving”
 - *Eu* (good) *charis* (gift)
- **Holy Communion** – common union in the holiness of God
 - *Cum* (with) *unus* (one/union)
- **Other names** - Holy Mass, the Lord’s supper, the Breaking of the Bread, the Divine Liturgy, the Sacred Mysteries, the Blessed Sacrament



Pre-figuration of the Eucharist

- **Natural sign** – wheat and grapes are crushed; grain and grapes while many come together as one to make bread or wine; bread satisfies, wine brings joy
- **Melchizedek** – king of Salem offers bread and wine
- **Passover meal** – the paschal lamb is eaten commemorating Israel's liberation from slavery
- **Manna in the desert** – God provided bread from heaven as a sign of his providence and presence
- **OT Sacrifices** – holocausts, peace/communion offerings, guilt offerings, each used living animals but also cereal, wine, and incense



Eucharist: Outward Sign

- **Form (Word)**
 - “Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for ***this is my body***, which will be given up for you.”
 - “Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for ***this is the chalice of my blood***, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me.”
- **Matter (Action)** – taking bread and wine
- **Minister** – bishop and priest
- **Recipient** – any baptized Catholic who is in a state of grace
 - i.e. not conscious of a mortal sin



Eucharist: Instituted by Christ

- **Mark 14:22** – “And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, ‘Take; this is my body.’ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ”
- **John 6:53** – “So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you’”



Eucharist: To Give Grace

- Effects of the Eucharist
 - Deepens our communion with the Trinity through Christ
 - Increases our communion with each other
 - Strengthens the unity of the Church
 - Forgives venial sins
 - Protects us from mortal sin
 - Renews the life of grace received in Baptism and Confirmation
 - Strengthens us in Charity
 - Increases our commitment to the poor



Sacramentals of the Eucharist in East and West

- Vestments



- Vessels



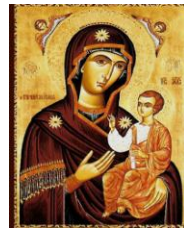
- Rood screen



- Candles



- Icons



- Crucifix



- Sacred Furniture



- Incense

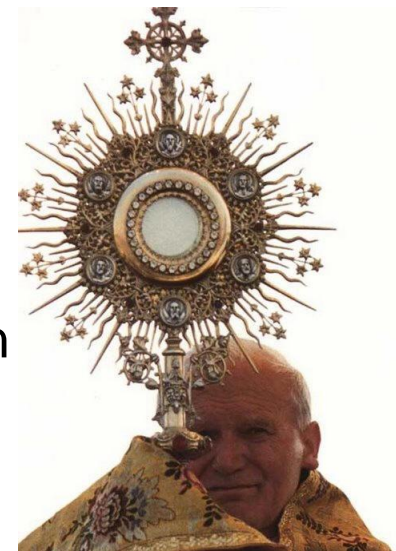


- Statues



Real Presence

- **Real Presence** – Christ is truly present body, blood, soul, and divinity under the appearance of bread and wine
 - The term “real presence” is not meant to deny the many other forms of Christ’s presence but to highlight the he is preeminently present in the Eucharist
- **Historical vs. Sacramental Presence**
 - **Historical presence** - when he physically walked on the earth
 - **Sacramental presence** - in the Eucharist
 - both his substantial presence
- Since Christ is truly present Catholics truly adore and worship the Eucharist (latria)
 - This is the theology behind Eucharistic adoration
- “Will you also go away” Jn 6:67



Real Presence



- Philosophical Distinction
 - *Substance*: What it really is
 - *Accidents*: What it looks like or appears to be (characteristics)
- **Transubstantiation**
 - Trans (across)
 - Sub-stance (to stand under)
 - Transubstantiation means the change of the whole substance of bread and wine into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ
 - While the *substance* of bread and wine change the *accidents* remain
- “Do not, therefore, regard the Bread and the Wine as simply that; for they are, according to the Master’s declaration, the Body and Blood of Christ. Even though the senses suggest to you the other, let faith make you firm.” St. Cyril of Jerusalem
 - Though the real presence exists independent of one’s personal faith; nevertheless, faith is necessary to perceive the real presence

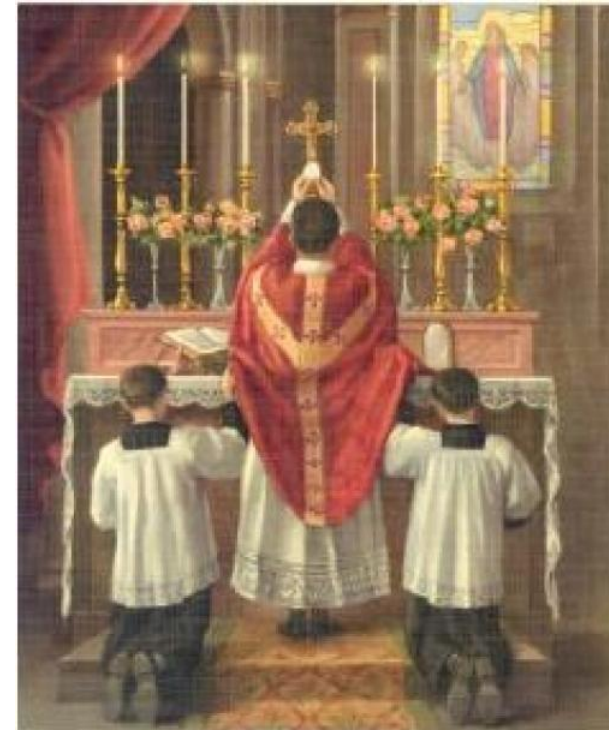
Memorial Sacrifice

- The Eucharist is a “memorial” in the sense that it makes present and actual the sacrifice which Christ offered to the Father on the cross
 - **Remembrance** – not simply a memory of a past and completed event but a participation in the actual event
 - The Eucharist is not a representation of the paschal mystery but a *re*-presentation
- The Eucharist is truly a “sacrifice”
 - “This is my body which is *given* for you” (Lk 22:19)
 - “This cup is the New Covenant in my Blood that will be *shed* for you” (Lk 22:20)
- The sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one and the same sacrifice
 - It is the same priest and victim but the manner of offering is different
 - The Eucharist is a perpetuation of his one sacrifice



Memorial Sacrifice

- When one is baptized he or she is united to Christ and incorporated into his body the Church
- This means that the Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the members of the Church
 - In the one sacrifice of Christ we who are his body offer our lives, praise, sufferings, prayers, work, joy, etc... in the Mass
 - “Pray brothers and sisters that my sacrifice and *yours* may be acceptable to God the almighty Father” (Roman Missal)
 - This sacrifice is also offered for all the faithful (living and dead), in reparation for sin, and for temporal and spiritual benefits



Communion

- When one receives the Eucharist he or she is truly united to Christ and all the members of his body the Church
 - The ultimate purpose of the Eucharist is union with God and one another
- “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.” 1 Cor 10:16-17



Communion

- One is united to Christ both *spiritually* and *physically*; thus one must be properly disposed to receive Holy Communion
- Dispositions of the soul
 - One must be in a state of grace
 - If one is aware of a mortal sin he/she must receive the sacrament of confession before receiving communion
 - Spirit of recollection and prayer
- Dispositions of the body
 - One hour fast before receiving communion
 - Appropriate gestures as a sign of reverence
 - Proper appearance as a sign of respect
- “Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord.” (1 Cor 11:27)



Communion



- The Church warmly recommends the reception of communion when one participates in the Mass
 - If properly disposed one can receive communion twice in one day if it is in the context of mass
 - **Easter duty** – obligation to receive Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter Season
 - **Sunday obligation** – to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days

Eschatological Banquet

- **Eschatological** – the Eucharistic banquet both connects us to and leads us toward final goal--heaven
 - The Eucharist is a pledge of the heavenly glory to come
 - It fortifies us in our pilgrimage and increases our longing for eternal life
 - Earth is united to heaven
- **Banquet** – In the Holy Mass Jesus gives us his living body and blood as spiritual food and spiritual drink
 - “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (Jn 6:53)
 - In the Eucharist, we “break the one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death and the food that makes us live forever in Jesus Christ” - St. Ignatius of Antioch (d.107)



Fractio Panis “The Breaking of Bread”
It is a third century fresco representing the eschatological banquet in the Kingdom of God, located in the Catacomb of St. Priscilla.

Basic Structure of the Mass

- Introductory Rites
- Liturgy of the Word
 - OT reading
 - Responsorial Psalm
 - Epistle
 - Gospel
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
 - **Took** – Offertory
 - **Blessed** – Consecration
 - **Broke** – Fraction
 - **Gave** – Communion
- Concluding Rite



The Liturgy of the Eucharist is structured according to Jesus four-fold action at the Last Supper

“And as they were eating, he *took* bread, and *blessed*, and *broke* it, and *gave* it to them...”
(Mk 14:22)