

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
The Eucharist

[Jesus said:] “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. . . . Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.” (John 6:51, 56)

Insight

For whom do you live? How do you give of yourself for them?

Ed and his three sons went on a camping trip each year. At the end of the every summer, they'd pack up their gear, tent, portable stove, and everything else they needed, and head to whichever location they had decided on. They looked forward to it. For one week they left mom and the girls behind. However, their mom's presence was felt, for it was she who packed the food and made the special trail mix. That's what they were eating now as they relaxed.

Mom left notes packed in with all of the food—words of wisdom or encouragement, phrases from poets, and quotes from her favorite literature. It was a “mom thing,” and as they enjoyed their camping trip, the notes tucked in with the food would make them smile.

For Reflection . . .

The Church herself participates in the sacrifice of Christ, offering in the Eucharist all that she is and does in union with her Head. Through the words of the Institution Narrative, a change takes place so that the entire substance of the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

What are you giving up in order to be joined completely to the Church?

When have you undergone a great change in order to help others? Why and how did that happen?

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1322–1419

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 213–232

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 271–294

Church Teaching

Supreme Gift from Christ to Us

The Eucharist completes Christian initiation and sustains it in an ongoing way. Unlike Baptism and Confirmation, Eucharist is repeated. Each week on the Lord's Day, Sunday, we return to the Eucharist, for it represents the preeminent sign of our unity and the bond of our love wherein Christ is consumed, and our minds and our hearts are filled with grace.

Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament at the Last Supper to perpetuate the one sacrifice of the Cross until he comes again in glory. The Eucharist memorializes the one sacrifice of Christ not merely in the sense of remembering the past but actually and truly making that sacrifice present here and now.

Celebration of Life, Love, and Heavenly Fulfillment

Two parts make up the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. They form one unified act of worship, praise, and thanksgiving. The word *Eucharist* derives from the Greek for “thanksgiving.”

Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the words of the priest, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. Christ is really and truly present under the species of bread and wine, so that they become his Body and Blood. This great mystery cannot be appreciated or apprehended through our senses but only by our faith, which comes from Divine Revelation.

Paschal Banquet

We approach this sacrament fostering within ourselves respect, solemnity, and joy, for through it Christ becomes the guest of our souls. This sacrament unites us with his own heart, with the Blessed Virgin Mary, and with all the saints in Heaven.