



Presence

THE MYSTERY OF THE EUCHARIST
INTRODUCTION

STUDY GUIDE



AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE®

Nihil Obstat: Jared Staudt, Ph.D., *Censor Deputatus*
Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver
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Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

AugustineInstitute.org

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PRESENCE: AN OVERVIEW

Welcome to the *Presence*. These sessions have been carefully designed to help participants discover the powerful way that God is present to us in the Eucharist, inviting us into an intimate union with himself. We will examine the effects of the sacrament and its setting in the Mass, explore the scriptural foundation of the sacrament, and discover the beauty of Holy Communion and the transformative power of the grace God offers us in this sacrament.

The *Presence* series utilizes session videos and this Study Guide to communicate its message.

PRESENCE: THE MYSTERY OF THE EUCHARIST

What You Will Find in Each *Presence* Session:

- 1. STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER:** An opening prayer to begin the session. You can read along silently or aloud.
- 2. INTRODUCTION:** A quick overview of the focus of the session.
- 3. STEP 2: CONNECT:** These conversation prompts will help you to personally connect with the session's topic.
- 4. STEP 3: VIDEO:** The video segment teaches the subject using the Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition of the Catholic Church as well as by sharing stories and testimonials. Use the outline to follow along and take notes.
- 5. STEP 4: DISCUSS:** These questions help you reflect on the topics of the session together.
- 6. STEP 5: COMMIT: Encountering God's Presence:** You will be guided through a brief reflection related to the topic of the session. This is a very important section that calls you not only to more deeply understand the Sacrament of the Eucharist, but also invites you to a deeper relationship with Christ and the Church.
- 7. STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER:** A closing prayer to end the session. You can read along silently or aloud.
- 8. DIGGING DEEPER:** Look for these additional teachings, quotations, and excerpts from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the saints, and other Catholic works to help you further understand the topic.
- 9. FOR FURTHER STUDY:** Each session includes suggested resources for continued study and reflection.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SACRAMENTAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH AND PRAYER IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN

The Eucharist is the sacrament by which the sacrificial Death and Resurrection of Jesus is re-presented in the Liturgy of the Mass, making it possible for us to enter into his sacrifice by eating his Body and drinking his Blood. Before beginning this study on the Eucharist, it is helpful to have some background knowledge of the Church and the Sacraments.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines the sacraments as “efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us” (CCC 1131). This means that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the sacraments actually give us the grace that they represent. Jesus instituted the seven sacraments as the means of offering us salvation and uniting us to himself—by bestowing his grace upon us through physical signs. The seven sacraments are:

Sacraments of Initiation	Sacraments of Healing	Sacraments at the Service of Communion
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baptism• Confirmation• Eucharist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reconciliation• Anointing of the Sick	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marriage• Holy Orders

THE CHURCH: SACRAMENT OF SALVATION

“Christ, having been lifted up from the earth has drawn all to Himself. Rising from the dead He sent His life-giving Spirit upon His disciples and through Him has established His Body which is the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation.”

—*Lumen Gentium*, 48

As the source of all grace come down from Heaven to be present to us, Jesus himself is the primary, living sacrament of God: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father...No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known” (John 1:14, 18).

If Jesus himself is the primary sacrament, then the Church, as the Body of Christ, can also be described as sacrament—the “sacrament of salvation”—because it is through the Church that Jesus continues to be present and at work in the world. We are called to a personal and intimate relationship with God, but he has also willed that we learn from and experience his love through the Church.

The Church is the visible sign of the invisible grace God has entrusted to her for the salvation of all. The Church “both contains and communicates the invisible grace she signifies” (CCC 774). The Church is a sign that points toward our individual union with God and our union with one another, but it is also the instrument by which God makes these two unions a reality.

Jesus has entrusted his work of salvation to the Church. He “manifests, makes present, and communicates his work of salvation through the liturgy of his Church, ‘until he comes’” (CCC 1076). He is always present in his Church, and the Church works by his power and authority to make the message of salvation known to all and to make God’s grace available to all through the sacraments. This is the nature of the Church—to communicate God’s love through preaching the Gospel and through the grace of the sacraments. The Church views reality through a sacramental lens: everything in the life of the Church and in our own individual lives can be understood as an opportunity to be an instrument of God’s love in the world.

God created us with both a body and soul, and we experience God’s love and express our love for him not only in a spiritual way, but through our physical senses as well. The signs and symbols of the sacraments provide that physical component that is necessary for us even in our physical relationship with God. The sacraments make us holy and heal our souls from the wounds of sin, but through the words and objects involved they also teach us and help us grow in faith. In the sacraments we experience the words and actions of Jesus, just as those present during his public ministry did. They are unique and transformative encounters with the God who loves us, and not mere celebrations or services.

PRAYER

“In the liturgy, all Christian prayer finds its source and goal.”

—CCC 1073

In the sacraments—and especially in the Mass—we participate in “Christ’s own prayer addressed to the Father in the Holy Spirit” (CCC 1073). The Church’s liturgical prayer joins us to the whole host of Heaven, led by Christ our High Priest in worship of the Father. This public and communal prayer (the word “liturgy” comes from a Greek word meaning “public work”) nourishes and strengthens our personal life of prayer, just as our personal life of prayer leads to a deeper and more fruitful participation in the liturgy of the Church.

The *Catechism* describes the life of prayer as “the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with him” (CCC 2565). It is not just a list of requests or even a series of conversations—it is an encounter, a relationship, that is vital to our Christian life. This communion with the Blessed Trinity is a gift from God, and we can enter into it only when we recognize that “humility is the foundation of prayer” (CCC 2559).

There are many different forms of prayer:

- **Blessing and Adoration**—responding to the blessings God has bestowed on us; worshipping him and glorifying him for his many gifts
- **Petition**—asking God to supply our every need; the first and most important prayer of petition is to ask forgiveness for our sins
- **Intercession**—petitioning on behalf of others
- **Thanksgiving**—giving thanks to God in all circumstances (see 1 Thessalonians 5:18); the most perfect prayer of thanksgiving is the Eucharist
- **Praise**—glorifying God for who he is (and not only what he has done for us)
“The Eucharist contains and expresses all forms of prayer” (CCC 2643).

Prayer can be expressed in three different ways:

- **Vocal prayer**—speaking to God in words, either mental or vocal; although it is the first and most accessible expression of prayer, it is essential to our life of prayer—both individually and in community
- **Meditation**—a quest for understanding; using our whole mind, including “thought, imagination, emotion, and desire” (CCC 2708) to come to a deeper knowledge of the love of God and therefore a closer union with him
- **Contemplative prayer**—resting in God’s presence and surrendering to his love; contemplative prayer is a gift we dispose ourselves to receive, not something we can make happen on our own

For Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 737-41 (“The Holy Spirit and the Church”), 770-80 (“The Mystery of the Church”), 849-56 (“Mission—a requirement of the Church’s catholicity”), 1066-68 (“Why the liturgy?”), 1069-70 (“What does the word liturgy mean?”), 1071-72 (“Liturgy as source of life”), 1073 (“Prayer and liturgy”), 1074-75 (“Catechesis and liturgy”), 1076-1206 (“The Sacramental Economy”), 1539-53 (“The Sacrament of Holy Orders in the Economy of Salvation”), 2558-2758 (“Prayer in the Christian Life”)



SESSION 1
GOD IS WITH US

STUDY GUIDE

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SESSION 1

GOD IS WITH US



OPENING PRAYER

Divine Savior, we come to your sacred table to nourish ourselves, not with bread but with yourself, true Bread of eternal life. Help us daily to make a good and perfect meal of this divine food. Let us be continually refreshed by the perfume of your kindness and goodness. May the Holy Spirit fill us with his love. Meanwhile, let us prepare a place for this holy food by emptying our hearts. Amen.

—Saint Francis de Sales



INTRODUCTION

When is the last time you sat down to enjoy a meal with your family or close friends—not just to eat food in close proximity to each other, but to bask in each other’s presence and grow in love for one another? For most of us, this doesn’t happen at a typical meal. But this is the kind of meal God wants to share with us. This is the kind of meal he has prepared for us and invited us to participate in through the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Scripture tells us that God is love (see 1 John 4:8). Everything that he does is out of love and expresses love. He created us out of love, and he died on the Cross to redeem us so that we could share in his love. God continues to invite us into a deeper experience of his perfect love in the Eucharist. He wants to unite us to himself, to pour his love into us and to receive our love. Under the appearance of simple bread and wine, God is truly and completely present with us.

*“If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason:
Holy Communion.”*

—Saint Maximilian Kolbe



CONNECT

What is your favorite way to enjoy the presence of your family or close friends?

What comes to mind when you think about God’s love for you?



DIGGING DEEPER

WHAT IS A SACRAMENT?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines the sacraments as “efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us” (CCC 1131). This means that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the sacraments actually give us the grace that they represent.

The sacraments are visible, tangible signs that make present to us the invisible, supernatural actions of Christ. God desires that we intimately know his love and the presence and power of his grace, so these sacramental signs allow us to experience in a real and human way God’s gift of divine love and grace.

Grace is a totally free and unmerited gift from God that gives us a participation in his own divine life. The graces imparted by the Church through the sacraments are called sacramental graces. The effects of these graces are both personal and ecclesial: communion with God and with the Church (see CCC 1129; 1134). They bear fruit in daily life through fidelity to the demands of Christian life and active participation in the Church’s mission.

The *Catechism* also tells us that it is actually Jesus who is at work in the sacraments. Although we see and hear the priest speaking the words and performing the actions, it is really Jesus who is working through the sacraments to offer us the grace he won for us through his sacrifice on the Cross (see CCC 1084–85).



continued next page



DIGGING DEEPER *continued*

HOW DO I KNOW THE SACRAMENTS WORK?

The Church teaches that the sacraments act *ex opere operato*, which literally means “by the very fact of the action’s being performed” (see CCC 1127–28). The power of the sacraments comes from Christ—not from our holiness or the holiness of the one presiding over it. We can be disposed to be more or less receptive to the fruits of each sacrament, but each of the sacraments effectively communicates its proper grace. Just as the visible signs of the sacraments are humble, everyday things—water, oil, bread, wine—the effects of the sacraments are often hidden and imperceptible. Even with great faith and an open heart, we may not always feel fed when we receive the Eucharist, but the Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ, and if we are properly disposed to receive this sacrament with reverence, it will nourish us, whether we feel like it does or not.



VIDEO

I. Martyrs and heroes of the Eucharist

- A. St. Philip Neri parish, New York, 1912
- B. St. Tarcisius, Roman Empire, AD 275
- C. St. Edmund Campion, England, 1581
- D. Young girl, China, 1900
- E. St. Clare, Assisi, Italy, 1224

II. What do Catholics believe?

- A. The Eucharist is one of the seven sacraments of the Church
 - 1. A sacrament is a channel of grace established by Christ to convey his divine life
 - 2. Bread and wine become the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ fully present
- B. Transubstantiation
 - 1. “trans”—to change
 - 2. “substance”—the essence of something; what it really is
 - 3. The outward appearance remains that of bread and wine, but the substance is changed into Jesus’s Body and Blood
- C. Humble outward signs of bread and wine point to the supernatural reality of spiritual nourishment

III. God is with his people

- A. Meals are about sharing relationships with other people

- B. God is love (see 1 John 4:8). He created us out of love in order to invite us into the communion of the Trinity
- C. God's presence in the Old Testament foreshadows the Eucharist
 1. God's revelation of his name at the burning bush—"I AM"—communicates not just God's existence, but his presence with his people.
 2. The refrain of God's covenants with his people is "I will be your God, and you will be my people" (for example, see Exodus 6:7)
- D. The Incarnation is the culmination of God's plan to be with his people
- E. Jesus established the Eucharist to remain present with us
 1. At the Last Supper Jesus changed bread and wine into his Body and Blood, and then he told the Apostles to continue to do what he had just done
 2. God gives himself to us in the Eucharist not only to give us strength for our journey, but also to accompany us at every moment on the journey



DIGGING DEEPER

NAMES OF THE EUCHARIST

"The Eucharist is 'the source and summit of the Christian life.' . . . In brief, the Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith" (CCC 1324, 1327).

The Eucharist is so important that the Church has many different names for it. Each name illuminates a different facet of the sacrament.



Eucharist—from the Greek word for "thanksgiving" because it is the perfect act of giving thanks to God.

The Lord's Supper—because Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper, and because it points forward to the heavenly wedding feast of the Lamb.

The Breaking of Bread—because Jesus broke bread at the first Eucharist at the Last Supper, and because it was by this action that his disciples at Emmaus recognized him; this was the name given to the sacrament by the first Christians (for example, see Acts 2:42).

The Eucharistic Assembly—because the sacrament is celebrated amid the faithful gathered together.

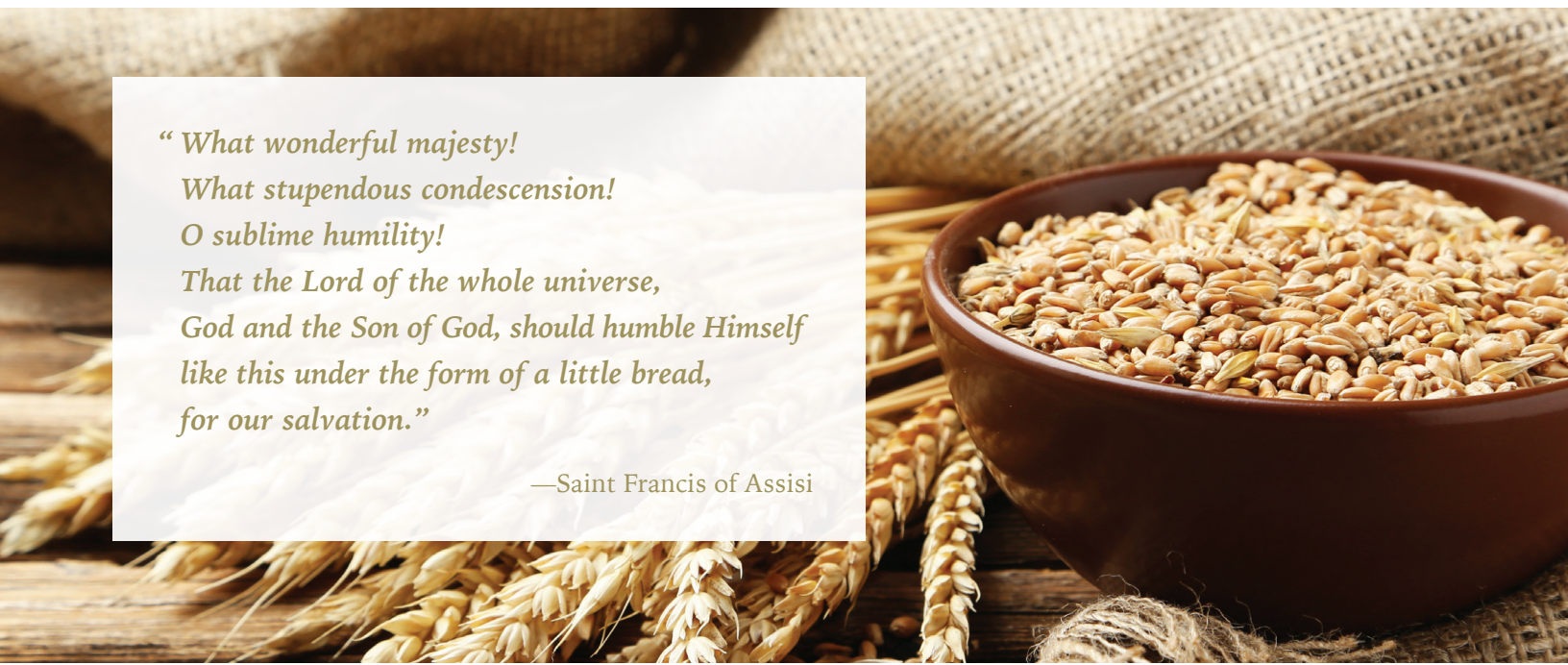
The Memorial of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection and The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass—because it makes Jesus's sacrifice on the Cross present to us and invites us as a priestly people to make a sacrificial offering of ourselves with Christ to the Father.

The Holy and Divine Liturgy and The Sacred Mysteries—because it is the center of the Church's whole liturgy and a participation in the heavenly liturgy.

The Most Blessed Sacrament—because it is the "Sacrament of sacraments" (CCC 1330).

Holy Communion—because it is by this sacrament that we are intimately united to Christ.

Holy Mass—(Latin *missa*)—because the liturgy ends (Latin *Ite, missa est*) by sending forth (Latin *missio*) the faithful to live out God's will in the world.



*“What wonderful majesty!
What stupendous condescension!
O sublime humility!
That the Lord of the whole universe,
God and the Son of God, should humble Himself
like this under the form of a little bread,
for our salvation.”*

—Saint Francis of Assisi



DISCUSS

- 1. What was one thing from the video that you heard for the first time or that was an “aha” moment for you?**

- 2. The Eucharist is called by many names (see page 13). Which one is your favorite? Why?**

- 3. The video asks the questions “How big is God?” and “How small is God?” How would you answer these questions? How is God both “big” and “small” in the Eucharist?**



COMMIT—ENCOUNTERING GOD’S PRESENCE

Do this take-home activity to strengthen your understanding of this week’s lesson and be prepared to share the next time your group meets.

How have you experienced God’s presence in your life?

From the very beginning, God has desired to be with his people. From the Garden of Eden to the Exodus, from the Tabernacle in the wilderness to the Temple in Jerusalem, the God of the universe has chosen to accompany his people and dwell with them. When he revealed his name to Moses at the burning bush, he revealed not only his power but also his presence.

Read the following verses slowly and prayerfully.

And the angel of the LORD appeared to [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.” When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the LORD said, “I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them. ... Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?” He said, “But I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain.”

Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM . . . this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.”

—Exodus 3:2–8, 10–15



What stands out to you in this passage?

When he reveals his name, God also reveals his faithfulness—not just “I AM” but “I am with you, always.” He identifies himself according to the promises he made to the patriarchs, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the God of the covenant: “I will make a covenant of peace with them. . . . My dwelling place shall be with them and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Ezekiel 37:26–27).

This promise is fulfilled in the New Covenant, where in Baptism the Trinity comes to dwell in our soul, and in the Eucharist Jesus gives us his Flesh and Blood to consume. The New Covenant realities far surpasses the prefigurations in the Old Testament.

This is Jesus’s promise to you: “Behold, I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20). He is present in the Eucharist, to accompany you through every moment of life.

How can this presence of Christ in the Eucharist be a source of strength and consolation as you journey through your life? In what ways can you grow in appreciating and embracing Christ’s presence in the Eucharist?

*“The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.”*

—Zephaniah 3:17



WRAP-UP and CLOSING PRAYER

Behold, God is my salvation;
I will trust, and will not be afraid;
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation.

With joy I will draw water from the wells of salvation.
Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the nations,
proclaim that his name is exalted.

Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;
let this be known in all the earth.
Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,
for great in our midst is the Holy One of Israel!
Amen.

—adapted from Isaiah 12

*“The greatest love story
of all time is contained
in a tiny white host.”*

—Venerable Fulton Sheen

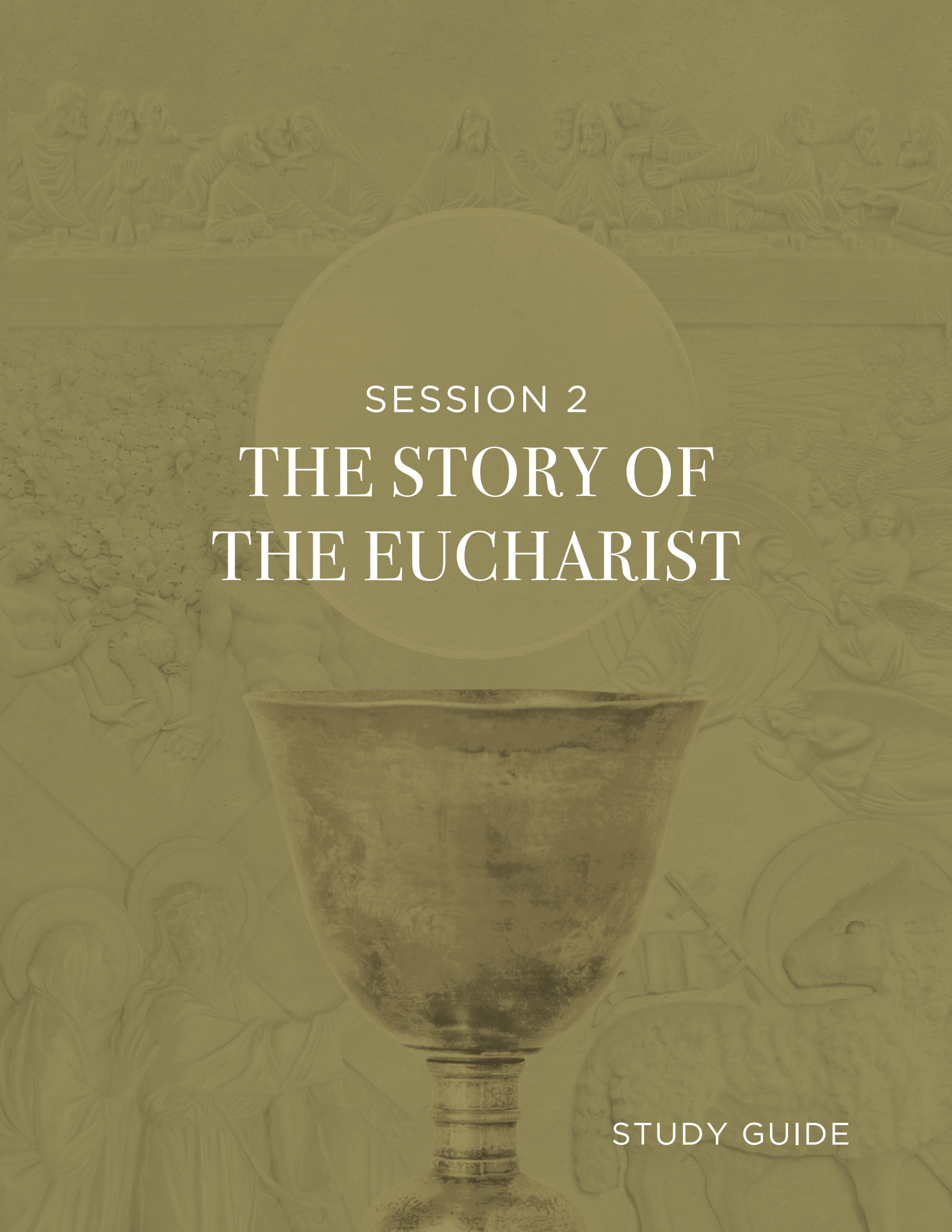
FOR FURTHER READING

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1077–134 (“The Liturgy—Work of the Holy Trinity” and “The Paschal Mystery in the Church’s Sacraments”), 1333–44 (“The Eucharist in the Economy of Salvation”), 1373–81 (“The Presence of Christ by the power of his word and the Holy Spirit”), 1996–2005 (“Grace”)

Joan Carroll Cruz, *Eucharistic Miracles and Eucharistic Phenomena in the Lives of the Saints* (TAN Books: 1991)

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life* (Ignatius Press: 2003)

Robert Barron, *Eucharist* (Orbis Books: 2008)



SESSION 2

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SESSION 2

THE STORY OF THE EUCHARIST



OPENING PRAYER

The Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within your wounds conceal me.
Do not permit me to be parted from you.
From the evil foe protect me.
At the hour of my death call me.
And bid me come to you,
to praise you with all your saints
for ever and ever.
Amen.

—Saint Francis de Sales



INTRODUCTION

Stories are powerful. They speak not only to our minds, but also to our hearts. A good story sticks with us long after we have heard it and continues to teach and inspire us.

God is the Master Storyteller. He authors his great love story not only with words, but with deeds. All of God's mighty deeds throughout history make up one beautiful narrative of salvation, which culminates in the Paschal Mystery. Jesus's teachings and actions throughout his ministry prepare for the moment he offers himself for, and to, each of us, fulfilling his promise that "My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed" (John 6:55).

“It would be easier for the world to survive without the sun than to do so without the Holy Mass.”

—Saint Pio of Pietrelcina



CONNECT

What was your favorite story as a child? Why?

How would you answer this question: “Where does belief in the Eucharist come from?”



DIGGING DEEPER

THE EUCHARIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Many of Jesus’s followers found his teaching on the Eucharist hard to accept. As strange as the command to eat his flesh and drink his blood may have sounded, it did not come out of the blue. The gift of the Eucharist is prefigured in many ways throughout the Old Testament.

At the very beginning of creation, Scripture reveals that mankind was created for intimate communion with God and was destined for eternal life. This reality is revealed in the context of a meal—Adam and Eve’s access to the fruit of the Tree of Life that was in the center of the Garden of Eden. (see Genesis 2:9, 3:22). As a result of Adam and Eve’s Original Sin, they are exiled from the Garden. No longer able to walk with God in garden or to have access to the Tree of Life and its fruit, Adam and Eve find they have lost communion and eternal life with God (see Genesis 3). Through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus, the Cross becomes the New Tree of Life once again offering all communion with God and eternal life, and it is the Eucharist that becomes its fruit.

Melchizedek, king of Salem (later renamed Jerusalem) and the “priest of God Most High,” offers a sacrifice of bread and wine in thanksgiving for Abram’s victory over his enemies (see Genesis 14:18–20). Jesus, the “King of kings” (Revelation 19:16) and “great high priest” (Hebrews 4:14),

continued next page



DIGGING DEEPER *continued*

changes bread and wine into his Body and Blood at Jerusalem and offers them as the perfect sacrifice to the Father (see Hebrews 10:1-18).

To save the Israelites from slavery and death in Egypt, God institutes the feast of Passover (see Exodus 12). This feast requires the sacrifice of a lamb without blemish and participation in a meal including the lamb and unleavened bread. By the blood of the lamb spread on the wood of the lintels and doorposts of their homes and the flesh of the lamb consumed in the meal, the Israelites are saved from the angel of death and brought out of slavery. Jesus, the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), sheds his blood on the wood of the Cross and gives us his Flesh to eat in the Eucharist. By his sacrifice and our participation in this sacramental meal, we are saved from spiritual death and brought out of slavery to sin.



To sustain his people in the wilderness, God provides manna (see Exodus 16). This miraculous bread from Heaven falls for forty years without fail, and ceases only when Israel has crossed over into the Promised Land. Jesus is the new Bread from Heaven, sustaining us with the food of his Body and Blood in the Eucharist while we journey toward the Promised Land of Heaven (see John 6:32-58).

THE EUCHARIST IN THE TEACHING AND MINISTRY OF JESUS

Through his miracles and his teaching, Jesus prepares his followers for the Eucharist even before he institutes the sacrament at the Last Supper.

Jesus’s very first miracle, changing water into wine at the Wedding Feast of Cana (see John 2:1-12), points forward to the greater miracle of changing wine into his Precious Blood at the Last Supper.

On more than one occasion, Jesus multiplies loaves of bread to feed vast multitudes of people (see Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-39; Mark 6:30-43; 8:1-10; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14). This miraculous provision of natural food points forward to the provision of his own Body as food for the whole world through the Eucharist.

In the Bread of Life discourse, Jesus tells his followers explicitly that he will provide his own Flesh and Blood as true food and true drink and that this supernatural food will give us eternal life (see John 6:22-71).

At the Last Supper, Jesus fulfills all the foreshadowings of the Old Testament and his own ministry when he turns bread and wine into his Body and Blood and gives them to the Apostles (see Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20). He tells his Apostles, “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). This meaning this miracle is not to be a one-time gift, but rather a sacrament to be continued for all ages. We know that the Apostles understand and obey this command because Saint Paul—who is not one of the Twelve at the Last Supper—continues to pass on this exact teaching almost twenty years later (see 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

It is the Eucharist that strengthens us to follow the instructions Jesus gives at the Last Supper: to love one another, to obey his commandments, and to abide in his love (see John 13-17).



VIDEO

I. John 6—Bread of Life Discourse

- A. Jesus's explicit teaching on the Eucharist
- B. Many followers leave Jesus over this teaching
- C. This teaching is so central to his mission that he lets them go

II. The Story of Scripture

- A. God's plan is for Adam and Eve to become one with him by eating from the Tree of Life
- B. Adam and Eve sever their communion with God through a meal
- C. When Adam and Eve sin, they turn away from the presence of God
- D. God promises a savior to overcome the obstacle of sin
- E. The whole Old Testament leads up to the sacrifice of the Cross

III. Passover

- A. Preparation for the tenth plague of the Exodus
- B. A sacrifice and a meal that inaugurated a rescue mission
- C. Celebrated every year to make present God's saving work in history and look forward to his ultimate salvation yet to come
- D. John 6 takes place during the Passover feast

IV. The Last Supper

- A. Jesus uses the traditional Passover meal to institute the Eucharist
- B. Applies sacrificial language to himself—he is the new Passover Lamb
- C. We participate in his sacrifice by receiving his Body and Blood in the Eucharist

V. Road to Emmaus

- A. First day of the week—new creation
 1. A test in a garden
 2. Jesus is the New Adam
 3. The Cross is the new Tree of Life, and the Eucharist is its fruit
- B. When we partake of the fruit of the Tree of Life, our eyes are opened to behold God



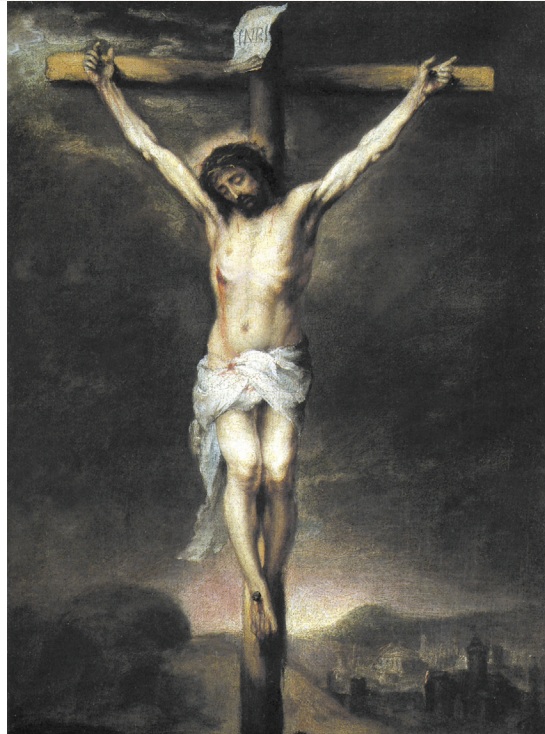
DIGGING DEEPER

SACRIFICIAL MEMORIAL

“The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ’s Passover, the making present and the sacramental offering of his unique sacrifice, in the liturgy of the Church which is his Body” (CCC 1362).

When Jesus instructs his Apostles to celebrate the Eucharist “in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19), he is telling them to celebrate a memorial (*anamnesis* in Greek), which has a very specific meaning for the Jews. In Scripture, a memorial does not merely call to mind what God has done in the past, but in proclaiming the mighty works of God the memorial makes them present again in a certain way. For this reason the Passover memorial is observed not just to remember what God did for one generation of Israelites, but to acknowledge and acclaim that his salvation is for the current generation as well.

Every time the Mass is celebrated, it really and truly makes present Jesus’s sacrifice at Calvary. The once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross is made present to us again, so that we may participate in it and be transformed and saved by it. With the whole Church, each of us is united to Christ in his one sacrifice so that we, too, may make a perfect offering to the Father.





DISCUSS

- 1. What was one thing from the video that you heard for the first time or that was an “aha” moment for you?**

- 2. What are some of the connections between Passover and the Eucharist? What does this teach us about the Eucharist?**

- 3. In the celebration of the Mass, how do we participate in offering the perfect sacrifice of Christ?**

- 4. In what ways is the Eucharist the fruit of the Tree of Life? What implications does this have for your own life?**

“The soul hungers for God, and nothing but God can satiate it. Therefore He came to dwell on earth and assumed a Body in order that this Body might become the Food of our souls.”

— Saint John Vianney



Why do you receive the Eucharist? What do you hope for or expect this sacrament to accomplish in you?

Read John’s vision of the Tree of Life in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever.

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. ... The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let him who hears say, “Come.” And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price.”

—Revelation 22:1-5, 14, 17



What stands out to you in this passage?

Consider the fruits of the Eucharist, listed in the Digging Deeper section. With which fruit(s) are you most familiar? Which one do you feel you need the most at this time in your life? Spend some time in prayer, asking our Lord especially for this fruit the next time you receive the Eucharist.



DIGGING DEEPER

FRUITS OF THE EUCHARIST (CCC 1391-1397)

What does the Eucharist do for us?

It draws us closer to Christ. It is called “communion” because it brings us into an intimate union with our Lord.

It nourishes and replenishes the life of grace we received in Baptism, just as regular food nourishes our physical life.

It cleanses us from past sins and helps us to avoid sin in the future.

It strengthens us in love.

It unites us more closely to the Church, the Body of Christ.

It helps us to see Christ in the poor and to care for them.



WRAP-UP and CLOSING PRAYER

O saving Victim, opening wide.
The gate of heaven to man below:
Our foes press on from every side;
Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.

To Thy great Name be endless praise,
immortal Godhead, One in Three!
O grant us endless length of days
In our true native land with Thee.
Amen.

—from *Verbum Supernum* by Saint Thomas Aquinas

“Lord Jesus Christ, pierce my soul with your love so that I may always long for you alone, who are the bread of angels and the fulfillment of the soul’s deepest desires. May my heart always hunger for you, so that my soul may be filled with the sweetness of your presence.”

—Saint Bonaventure

“The Sacrament of the Body of the Lord puts the demons to flight, defends us against the incentives to vice and to concupiscence, cleanses the soul from sin, quiets the anger of God, enlightens the understanding to know God, inflames the will and the affections with the love of God, fills the memory with spiritual sweetness, confirms the entire man in good, frees us from eternal death, multiplies the merits of a good life, leads us to our everlasting home, and re-animates the body to eternal life.”

—Saint Thomas Aquinas

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SESSION 3
BREAD FOR THE
JOURNEY

STUDY GUIDE

Nihil Obstat: Jared Staudt, Ph.D., *Censor Deputatus*
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Writers: Ashley Crane, Therese Obagi

Print Production/Graphic Design: Jeff Cole, Brenda Kraft, Ben Dybas, Ann Diaz, Douglas Mazza, Lisa Marie Patterson

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Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

AugustineInstitute.org

formed.org

SESSION 3

BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY



OPENING PRAYER

Stay with me, Lord,
for it is necessary to have You present so that I do not forget You.
You know how easily I abandon You.

Stay with me, Lord,
because I am weak and I need Your strength, that I may not fall so often.

Stay with me, Lord,
for You are my life, and without You, I am without fervor.

Stay with me, Lord,
for You are my light, and without You, I am in darkness.

Stay with me Lord,
to show me Your will.

Stay with me, Lord,
so that I hear Your voice and follow You.

Stay with me, Lord,
for I desire to love You very much, and always to be in Your company.

Stay with me, Lord,
if You wish me to be faithful to You.

Let me recognize You as Your disciples did at the breaking of the bread,
so that the Eucharistic Communion be the light which disperses the darkness,
the force which sustains me, the unique joy of my heart.

Stay with me, Lord
for it is You alone I look for, Your Love, Your Grace, Your Will, Your Heart,
Your Spirit, because I love You and ask no other reward
but to love you more and more.

Amen.

—adapted from the *Prayer of Saint Padre Pio After Communion*



INTRODUCTION

Food is one of our most basic needs. We can't live for long without it, and when we are in need of it, our bodies let us know with a hunger that can be nearly impossible to ignore. As indispensable as material food is to our physical life, the Eucharist is even more vital to our spiritual life. God saved the Israelites from starvation in the wilderness by providing manna for them. We need the Eucharist even more than the Israelites needed the manna. It sustains and strengthens us for our life's journey. It is, as Monsignor Ronald Knox once said, "the day's food for the day's march."

"If Christ did not want to dismiss the Jews without food in the desert for fear that they would collapse on the way, it was to teach us that it is dangerous to try to get to heaven without the Bread of Heaven."

— Saint Jerome



CONNECT

Have you ever experienced a time when you were traveling or on a journey and were really hungry and tired? What was the experience like?

What is your favorite part of the Mass? Why?



DIGGING DEEPER

OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE MASS

By coming together with the community of the faithful and participating in the Mass, we give public witness that we belong to Jesus and to his Body, the Church. It is also a public testimony of our faith in God and our hope of salvation.

But sometimes it might seem like the priest and deacon—and perhaps the choir, lectors, and altar servers—are the ones “doing” the Mass, and the rest of us are just the audience. But the *Catechism* tells us that “it is the whole community, the Body of Christ united with its Head, that celebrates” the sacramental liturgy (CCC 1140). We have different roles to play, but we are all called to participate in a profound way at each and every Mass.



It is Christ himself who presides over the Eucharist; the priest is his visible representative, acting *in persona Christi capitis* (in the Person of Christ the head) and not by his own authority or power. The Eucharistic celebration is the highest purpose of the ordained priesthood.

The various roles fulfilled by the laity in the Mass—providing music, reading from the Scriptures, serving at the altar, distributing Communion, etc.—are important contributions to the liturgy, but none of them is the primary way in which we are called to participate in the celebration of the liturgy.

The laity participates in the Mass by actively listening to the readings and liturgical prayers and by reciting the responses of the congregation, but most of all by consciously and intentionally uniting themselves to the sacrifice of Christ. We have seen how the Eucharist is a memorial—the re-presentation—of Jesus’s saving sacrifice on the Cross. Jesus doesn’t offer this sacrifice so that we don’t have to, but rather he offers it in order to draw us into his sacrifice so that we can make an offering to the Father with him.

In the Eucharist we participate in Jesus’s sacrifice on the Cross, in which he offers not only himself but all of creation to the Father. United to Christ in this sacrament, we offer this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the Father as well. In the Eucharist we give thanks to God for his many gifts—especially the gifts of creation, redemption, and sanctification. We also give all praise, honor, and glory to God on behalf of ourselves and all of creation. We make an offering of ourselves, united to the perfect offering of Christ, and we offer this sacrifice to the Father. This self-offering is the heart of our participation in the Mass.

Our participation in the liturgy is so important that we are required to attend Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation (unless we have a serious reason we cannot attend, such as illness). The Church also requires us to receive the Eucharist at least once a year, but she encourages us to receive the sacrament at every Mass at which we are properly disposed and prepared to do so.



VIDEO

I. Food for the journey

- A. God gives the Israelites manna for their journey in the wilderness
- B. The Eucharist sustains us on our spiritual journey
- C. The Eucharist is a foretaste of Heaven
 - 1. We receive Christ, who is our ultimate goal
 - 2. We are brought into communion with God and with everyone else who is in communion with God
 - 3. In the Mass, we worship God together with all the angels and saints in Heaven

II. The Mass

- A. Liturgy of the Word
 - 1. We encounter God in Scripture
 - 2. We respond in faith through the Creed and the Prayers of the Faithful
- B. Liturgy of the Eucharist
 - 1. The sacrifice of Jesus is made present in the Eucharist
 - 2. The climax of the liturgy is when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion
- C. Story of Emmaus
 - 1. Liturgy of the Word—Jesus interprets the Scriptures for the disciples
 - 2. Liturgy of the Eucharist—Jesus takes, blesses, breaks, and gives the bread
- D. In the Mass, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Death, and the Resurrection of Jesus are made present

III. Rules for receiving the Eucharist

- A. Never receive the Eucharist in a state of mortal sin (see 1 Corinthians 11:27–29)
- B. Fast from food and drink (except water or medicine) for at least one hour before receiving
- C. Receive at least once a year

IV. Our participation in Mass

- A. Colossians 1:24—we participate in Christ’s sacrifice
- B. Intentionally giving ourselves back to God when we receive the Eucharist
- C. The Eucharist is our offering of thanksgiving to God

V. Eucharistic adoration

- A. “I look at Jesus, and Jesus looks at me”
- B. Jesus is present in every Tabernacle, waiting for us

VI. Sent forth

- A. *Ite, missa est*—we are sent out from Mass with a purpose
- B. The world needs us to share what we have received



DISCUSS

- 1. What was one thing from the video that you heard for the first time or that was an “aha” moment for you?**

- 2. How do we participate in the sacrifice of Jesus in the Eucharist? What are some practical ways to be intentional about participating in this way?**

- 3. At the end of Mass, we are dismissed with a purpose. What is our mission when we leave Mass? What can we do to live out this mission?**

“Know, O Christian, that the Mass is the holiest act of religion. You cannot do anything to glorify God more, nor profit your soul more, than by devoutly assisting at it, and assisting as often as possible.” —Saint Peter Julian Eymard



DIGGING DEEPER

MATTER, FORM, AND MINISTER

Every sacrament has essential elements that are necessary for the sacrament to be valid. The matter of a sacrament is the tangible part—the material used and the action performed. The form is the spoken words that go along with the matter. And a sacrament is only valid if it is administered by someone with the authority to do so.



In the Eucharist, the matter is bread made from wheat flour and wine made from grapes (in which a little water has been mixed). Once consecrated they are referred to as the two Eucharistic species. In the Latin Church the bread is unleavened; in the Eastern Churches it is leavened.

The form of the Eucharist is the words of Consecration (“This is my body,” and “This is the chalice of my blood”), which are found in the Eucharistic Prayer within the Mass. This is the account of what Jesus said and did at the Last Supper.

The minister of the Eucharist is a validly ordained bishop or priest, acting under the authority of the bishop. Only a bishop or priest can offer the prayers of the Mass and preside over the Sacrament.

When the priest takes bread and wine and with the intent to consecrate them speaks the words of Consecration, the bread and the wine become the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.



COMMIT—ENCOUNTERING GOD’S MERCY

Read the account of the manna from Heaven in Exodus.

And the whole congregation of the people of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or not...I have heard the murmurings of the sons of Israel; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning dew lay round about the camp. And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as hoarfrost on the ground. When the sons of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.”

—Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15

Imagine that you are one of the Israelites. How do you feel at the beginning of the story? How do you feel when God sends the manna?

The Israelites call the bread from Heaven *manna*, which comes from the Hebrew phrase for “What is it?” It is something new and miraculous, which no one has ever seen before. But after forty years of receiving it, the novelty wears off and the Israelites become so unappreciative that they complain, “We loathe this worthless food” (Numbers 21:5).

The manna is a prefiguration of the Eucharist. The fulfillment is always greater than what came before—as beautiful and amazing as the miracle of the manna was, the Eucharist is still greater. The Eucharist is humble and familiar. The miracle is veiled from our senses, and so it can be easy to take it for granted and miss its incredible sweetness, as the Israelites came to do with the manna.

Consider the following meditation on the manna from the Wisdom of Solomon. This book, written in the second century BC to encourage the Jews living in Alexandria to remain faithful to God’s covenant, offers a profound reflection on this miracle.



*Instead of [destruction] you gave your people the food of angels,
and without their toil you supplied them from heaven with bread ready to eat,
providing every pleasure and suited to every taste.
For your sustenance manifested your sweetness toward your children;
and the bread, ministering to the desire of the one who took it,
was changed to suit every one’s liking.*

—Wisdom of Solomon 16:20–21

What stands out to you in the passage? How does it apply to the Eucharist even more than to the manna?

The manna is the bread for the Israelites' journey to the Promised Land. The Eucharist is our bread for the journey to Heaven—and so one of its names is *viaticum*, Latin for “provision for the journey.” This name has come to be used exclusively for the Eucharist when it is given to someone who is near death. *Viaticum* is provision for the final step of the journey to our Promised Land, the “seed of eternal life and the power of resurrection” (CCC 1524). On every step of the journey, the Eucharist is our daily bread, our sustenance, and our source of every grace and blessing.

Take some time in prayer to thank God for the gift of the Eucharist, and to ask him to help you grow in your love for this sacrament.

“O Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I would like to be filled with love for You; keep me closely united with You, may my heart be near to Yours.”

—Pope Saint John XXIII



DIGGING DEEPER

WHY MUST WE RECEIVE THE FORGIVENESS OF MORTAL SINS IN THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION BEFORE RECEIVING THE EUCHARIST?

Catholics often get asked why we need to confess our sins to a priest instead of going directly to God. While God can certainly forgive us directly, Jesus makes it clear that he wants to forgive our sins through the Sacrament of Reconciliation (see John 20:21–23).

The Church does not require us to confess our venial sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation—although it’s very good for us to do so—but the Sacrament is necessary for the forgiveness of mortal sins.

A mortal sin is **1)** a grave sin (specified by the Ten Commandments) that is **2)** committed with full knowledge and **3)** complete consent.

Any grave sin committed without full knowledge or deliberate consent is still a venial sin.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us to face the reality of our sins and—if we truly repent—to know with assurance that God has forgiven us. Then we are ready to show proper reverence as we enter into intimate union with our God in Holy Communion.





DIGGING DEEPER

SAINT JUSTIN MARTYR AND THE MASS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The Mass has been essentially the same from the very earliest days of the Church until the present time. Saint Justin Martyr wrote to the Roman emperor Antoninus around the year AD 155 to explain some of the practices of the Christians. This is what he said about the Mass:

“And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray for ourselves and for... all others in every place....Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss.

There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen.

And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

And this food is called among us Eucharistia of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; But . . . we [have] been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word . . . is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.”

—Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, excerpts from 65-67

“O Jesus, concealed in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, my only love and mercy, I commend to You all the needs of my body and soul. You can help me, because You are Mercy itself. In You lies all my hope.” —Saint Faustina



WRAP-UP and CLOSING PRAYER

Very Bread, Good Shepherd, tend us,
Jesus, of thy love befriend us,
Thou refresh us, thou defend us,
Thine eternal goodness send us
In the land of life to see:

Thou who all things canst and knowest,
Who on earth such food bestowest,
Grant us with thy saints, though lowest,
Where the heav'nly feast thou showest,
Fellow heirs and guests to be.
Amen.

—from *Lauda Sion* by Saint Thomas Aquinas

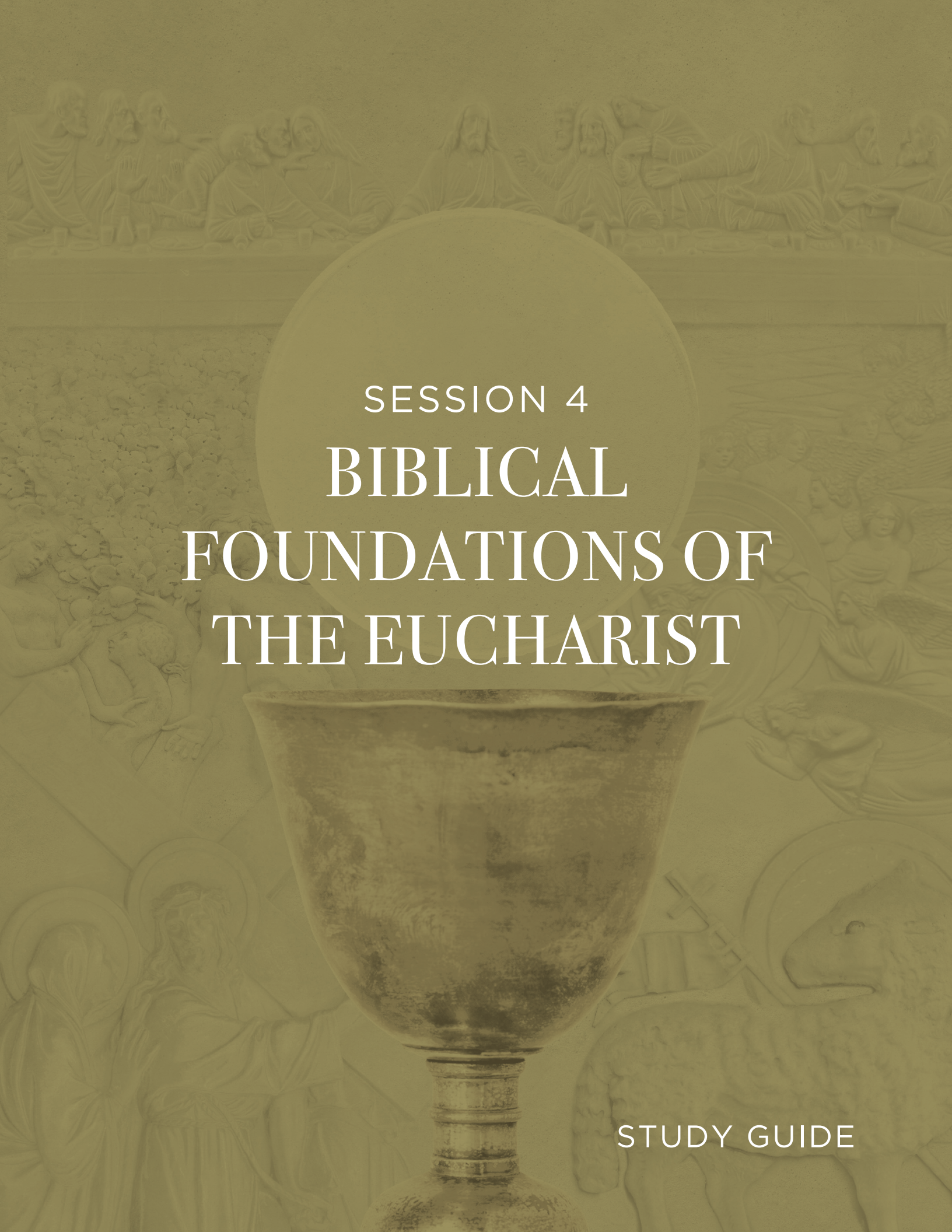
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SESSION 4
BIBLICAL
FOUNDATIONS OF
THE EUCHARIST

STUDY GUIDE

Nihil Obstat: Jared Staudt, Ph.D., *Censor Deputatus*
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Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

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SESSION 4

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE EUCHARIST



OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, on the night of the Last Supper,
you begged your Heavenly Father for the gift of unity.
Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
may we who seek to be more united with God and one another be satisfied in our longing.
And may we satisfy Your longing, O Lord,
by helping others to know and love you in the Sacrament of Love,
you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.
Amen.

—based on John 17:20–22



INTRODUCTION

“How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” These words uttered 2,000 years ago are echoed today. The doctrine of the Real Presence presents a difficulty for many people. When we take the time to understand the difficulties, we become better equipped to help address them. This can be done especially by showing how the Scriptures really do mean what the Church says they do. This session examines objections to the Church’s Eucharistic teaching and provides scriptural answers for them. This apologetic helps us to give a reason for our faith and to gain a deeper insight into our faith.



1. Have you ever watched or engaged in wrestling or other martial arts? Sometimes smaller competitors win over heavier ones. What are ways this can happen?

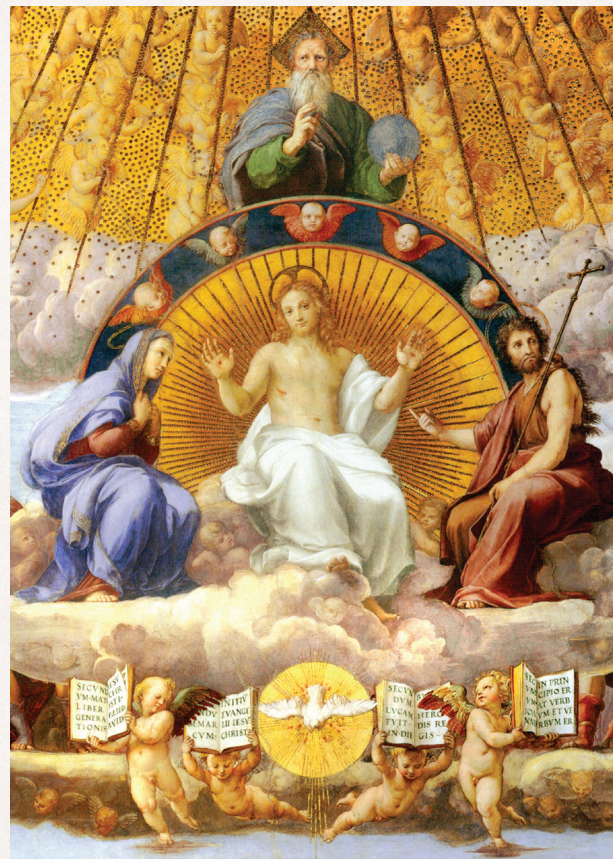
2. Describe a time in your life when you learned something by listening carefully to a person who disagreed with you?



DIGGING DEEPER

In the Vatican is a magnificent painting by Raphael called “The Disputation of the Sacrament.” Despite the title, the picture is not of an argument, but rather it depicts the Blessed Sacrament, with Christ in glory above, and below a great crowd of adorers. They are clearly engrossed, some with books or engaged in writing. It is an active but peaceful scene.

The Eucharist is central to our faith, and we should be eager to understand it more. All our disputes and arguments should take their cue from Raphael’s painting: they should flow peacefully from faith and love and aim at producing more of the same.





VIDEO PART 1 (INTRODUCTION; JEWISH AND PAGAN OBJECTIONS)

I. Introduction

- A. Objections to the doctrine of the Real Presence
- B. Value of considering objections

II. Four groups of objectors

- A. Jewish
- B. Pagan
- C. Protestant Reformation
- D. Secularist

III. Jewish and Pagan Objections

- A. Jewish difficulties, looking at John 6
 1. In calling himself the Bread from Heaven, Jesus is making a claim to be divine
 2. Jesus's insistence on eating his Flesh shows he is the new Passover Lamb, essential to participation in the New Covenant
 3. Jesus's insistence on drinking his Blood is contrary to the Old Law
 4. Reason for difference: It is Jesus's Life that is in the blood
- B. Pagan difficulties
 1. Evidence that the early Church really believed in the True Presence
 2. Problem: Cannibalism
 3. Response: not cannibalism, but communion with the living flesh of Christ





DIGGING DEEPER

REAL PRESENCE

Jesus is present with us in many ways—in Scripture, in prayer, in the poor and suffering. . . but he is present in a unique way in the Eucharist. The *Catechism* says that in the Blessed Sacrament “the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained” (CCC 1374). Although all appearances (also called accidents) of bread and wine remain, the substance of both the bread and the wine are truly changed into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus. This is what the Church means by the term transubstantiation.

This change happens at the moment of consecration and continues as long as the Eucharistic species survive as such—in other words, until they are digested. Christ is completely present under both species, in the tiniest piece of a host and the smallest drop from the chalice. So even if you only receive under one species—only receiving the Host, or only receiving from the chalice—you are still receiving all of Jesus—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.



DISCUSS PART 1

1. What was one thing from the video that you heard for the first time or that was an “aha” moment for you?

2. In the video, Tim Gray focuses on two groups that have objections to the Church’s doctrine of the Real Presence. Which of these groups do you sympathize with the most?

3. Have you ever heard the Jewish objections before? How about the Pagan difficulty? What things might we say or do to help remove those objections?



I. Historical background for Protestant objections

- A. Luther did not deny, although his teaching was different from the Catholic understanding of transubstantiation
- B. Others like Zwingli and Calvin did deny the Real Presence
 - 1. Eucharist explained metaphorically

II. Scriptural background: John 6

- A. “What if you were to see the son of man ascending . . . ” a defense of his divinity
 - 1. “It is the Spirit that gives life. The flesh is of no avail.”
 - 2. In verse 66, many disciples leave

III. Protestant Interpretation and Catholic Responses

- A. “Flesh is of no avail” = no Real Presence, just a metaphor
 - 1. Disregards Christ’s repeated statements
 - 2. Christ’s words related to the soul and eternal life, distinct from earthly bread
 - 3. Christ’s actions show he is speaking literally
 - 4. He does not call disciples back (after verse 66)
 - 5. Belief in Eucharist rests on belief in Christ’s divinity
 - a. Three Passovers, a progression of faith
 - 6. Actual metaphorical statements are different from Bread of Life statements.
- B. Saint Paul evidence (1 Corinthians 11)
 - 1. A tradition handed on by the Lord himself
 - a. New Covenant in blood
 - b. Real covenant has real blood; if it were simply metaphorical blood, then it would just be a metaphorical covenant
 - 2. Paul’s warning against eating and drinking unworthily
 - a. A profanation deserving judgment
 - b. Evidence of divine wrath
 - c. Paul takes the Real Presence seriously, so does the Church
- C. Additional Pauline evidence
 - 1. “Cup of blessing is a participation in the blood . . . ”
 - 2. Those who eat the sacrifice are partners in the altar
 - 3. Participation and partners related to word *koinonia*
 - 4. Church being the Body of Christ depends on the Real Presence



DIGGING DEEPER

GUIDELINES FOR RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

The Church gives us some guidelines for the reception of Holy Communion to help us approach the sacrament reverently.

The Eucharist is a communion with Christ and with his Body, the Church. It is a statement of faith in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and of unity with the entire Catholic Church. Outside of the unbroken succession of authority from the Apostles to today's bishops (apostolic succession), there is no priesthood; and without the priesthood, there is no valid Eucharist. Therefore, the bread and wine received in Protestant ecclesial communities is not the Body and Blood of Jesus.

Because of these differences, only a baptized member of the Catholic Church who believes in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist may receive Holy Communion; and a Catholic must not receive communion in a Protestant service.

The Eucharist as a sign of the real unity of the Church—including all Christians who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church—reminds us to pray earnestly that God would heal the divisions among believers.

We should not receive the Eucharist if we are conscious of having committed a mortal sin. All mortal sins must be confessed in the Sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving the Eucharist.

We must fast for at least one hour from food and drink (with the exceptions of water and medicine) before receiving the Eucharist.

The faithful may receive Holy Communion a maximum of two times in one day, but only if the second reception takes place during a Mass. (The exception to this is in the case of the Eucharist given as Viaticum to a person in danger of death, which may be received at any time.)



DISCUSS PART 2

4. What is at the heart of accepting the doctrine of the Eucharist?

5. Why do some Protestants say that Jesus's words are a metaphorical statement? How do his words about being the Bread of Life compare to other statements like "I am the vine"?

6. What are the three Passovers? How do these three events help to dispel the idea that Jesus is speaking metaphorically?

7. What is the evidence from Saint Paul that Jesus is not speaking metaphorically but metaphysically?



VIDEO PART 3 (SECULAR OBJECTIONS AND CONCLUSION)

I. Secular Objections

A. You really believe that God is present?

1. Seems insane
2. Post-enlightenment: everything must be explained by reason or it's not true
3. Excludes all faith

II. Response: faith is not contrary to reason, but goes above and beyond reason

A. Key Christian belief of the Eucharist stands with the Incarnation and Resurrection

B. It's rational and reasonable to say God changes bread and wine into his Body and Blood, but it does take faith

C. Some truths do go beyond the comprehension of our reason; faith is necessary to have life

III. "Unless you eat the flesh ... you have no life in you."

A. Jesus is the lamb of the New Passover

1. Must eat the lamb
2. Must drink his blood to share divine life

B. The Bible is framed with the theme of eating and drinking for eternal life

1. Genesis: Tree of Life
2. Revelation, promises to those who conquer
 - a. 2:7 - promise to eat of the Tree of Life
 - b. 2:17 - promise of the hidden manna

- c. 3:20 – promise to come in and eat
 - d. Climax in Revelation 19 – Wedding Feast of the Lamb
 - e. Also climax of John’s writings
- C. Conclusion: Faith in the Eucharist is reasonable**
1. Consistency of Scripture evidence of its divine origin
 2. Evidence of Scripture points to centrality of the Real Presence in the Eucharist



DIGGING DEEPER

WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARIST

As a sign of our faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, we offer this sacrament our adoration and worship both during the Mass and outside of it. We can rightly say that we worship the Eucharist because the Eucharist is Jesus.

We show our reverence by kneeling during the Consecration and bowing or making some other sign of devotion when receiving the Eucharist. Outside of Mass the consecrated Hosts are kept with care in the Tabernacle, with a candle burning near it to signify the presence of the Lord, and we genuflect to the Tabernacle. In addition, we have the unique opportunity to spend time in the presence of God, gazing upon him and worshipping him in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

We also show reverence for our Lord in the Eucharist by preparing ourselves carefully before receiving Holy Communion. God himself calls us to draw near to him in this sacrament, but it is not something to be taken lightly.



DISCUSS PART 3

8. What does “reasonable” mean for the secular objectors? How does the scientific interpretation limit not only belief in the Eucharist, but all belief in Jesus? Why do we say that faith is beyond reason but not contrary to reason?

9. What is the significance of the literary arguments about the Tree of Life, Feast of the Lamb, etc.?

10. How does Mary's life show us how to approach the Eucharist in a biblical way?



DIGGING DEEPER

"He once in Cana of Galilee, turned the water into wine, akin to blood, and is it incredible that He should have turned wine into blood? When called to a bodily marriage, He miraculously wrought that wonderful work; and on the children of the bride-chamber, shall He not much rather be acknowledged to have bestowed the fruition of His Body and Blood?"

—St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lecture*, 22, 2



COMMIT—THE WORD MADE FLESH

Inspired by this week's teaching on the biblical apologetics for the Real Presence, consider writing down a specific way in which you will make these arguments your own. Perhaps it will be a short summary of how Holy Communion, by uniting us to the living Christ, is not a cannibalistic act, but a sanctifying deed. Perhaps it will be meditating on the two-part argument: 1) if Christ is God, then he can change bread into his Body; 2) the Gospels make it clear that he does want just that.

The best way, of course, to make this lesson ours, is to embrace the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and to receive that Presence in Holy Communion at Mass. Make a commitment to spend some time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament this week and ask him how he wants you specifically to grow from this time of study. With God's grace, we will grow in our capacity to live his life in us and to share that life with others.



WRAP-UP and CLOSING PRAYER

Beloved Lord, in the Book of Revelation it is written:

“I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches.

I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star.”

We, the members of your Body, the Church, say

“Come.” Come to us in the Eucharist,

come to us in the Scriptures, come to us with the fullness of life.

Through the intercession of your Mother, Mary,

may we always treasure the Word within us

and make that Word known and loved in time and in eternity.

Amen.

FOR FURTHER READING

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1333-1344 (“The Eucharist in the Economy of Salvation”), 1384-1390 (“‘Take this and eat it, all of you’: communion”), 1400 (Ecclesial communities)

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*: 22, On the Body and Blood of Christ and 23, *On the Sacred Liturgy and Communion*

Pope Saint John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (Rome, 2003)

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