

Thursday

The Holy Eucharist

Thursdays we give special reverence to the Holy Eucharist, in part because Thursday was the day of the Last Supper. How can we cover the Eucharist in only a couple of pages? We cannot! It is simply not possible to cover the “source and summit” of our faith in only a handful of pages.

“This is my body, which is given for you.” (Luke 22:19)

WHAT IS THE EUCHARIST?

The Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life.” (CCC 1324). It is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. (CCC 1353) To put it most simply: the Eucharist is Jesus.

IS THE EUCHARIST ONE OF THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS?

Yes, the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is one of the Seven Sacraments and completes the Sacraments of



Initiation, which include Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist. (CCC 1322) All of the other seven Sacraments “are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it.” (CCC 1324) Sacraments are outward, visible signs of inward grace, instituted by Christ for our sanctification. (Saint Augustine)

“The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.” (CCC 1131)

In each of the Sacraments, specific words and actions are done. The Sacramental Words are the **form**. The actions (or “stuff”) is the Sacramental Sign, and is called the **matter**.

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WHAT IS THE “MATTER” OF EUCHARIST?

The matter is the bread and wine used by the Priest during Mass.

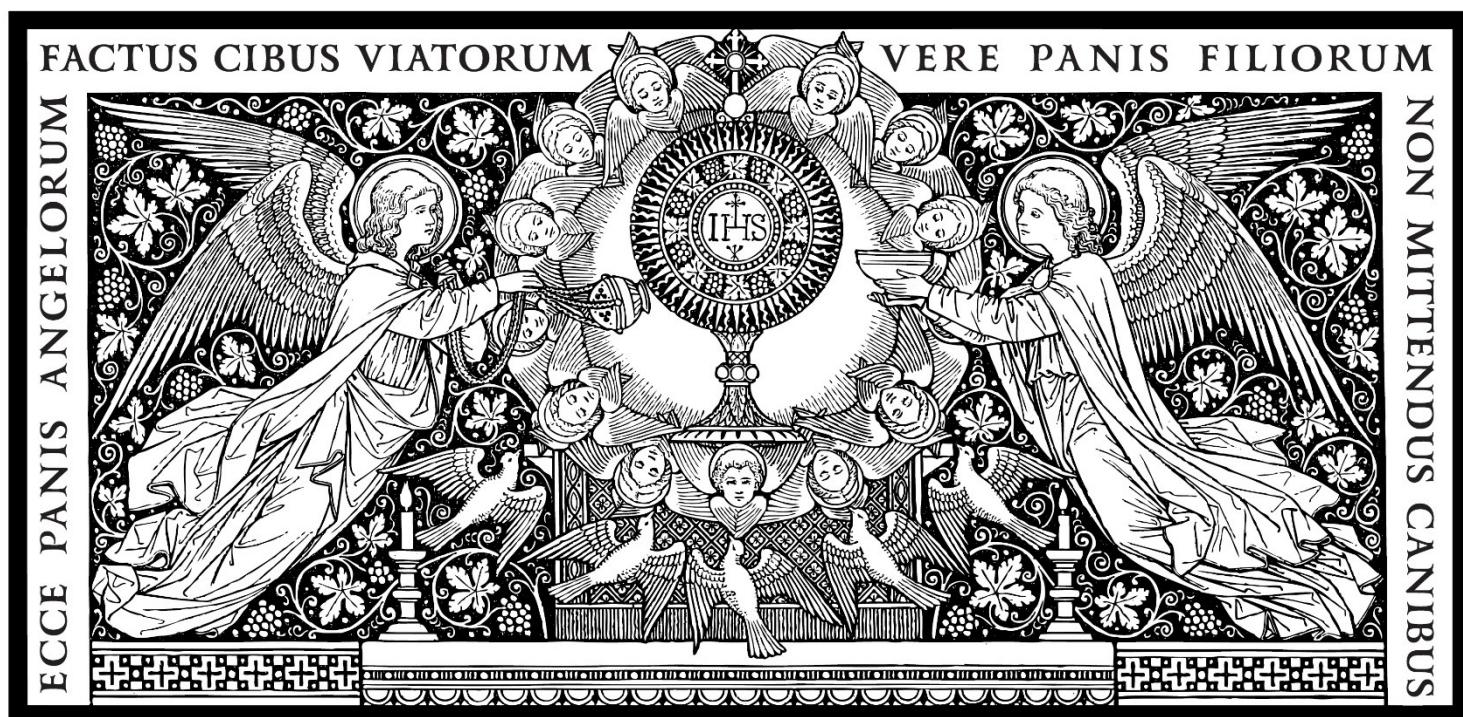
- **Bread:** “The bread for celebrating the Eucharist must be made only from wheat, must be recently baked, and...must be unleavened [nothing added to it except water].” (GIRM 320)
- **Wine:** “The wine for the Eucharistic celebration must be from the fruit of the grapevine.” It must be natural and have nothing added to it. (GIRM 322) The Priest will pour a little water into the wine saying: “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.” (GIRM 142)

This is also stated in Canon Law 924: §1. The most holy eucharistic sacrifice must be offered with bread and with wine in which a little water must be mixed; §2. The bread must be only wheat and recently made so that there is no danger of spoiling; and §3. The wine must be natural from the fruit of the vine and not spoiled.

WHAT IS THE “FORM” OF EUCHARIST?

The form is the Sacramental Words needed to complete the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The form is said by the Priest at Mass during Liturgy of the Eucharist (when we are kneeling). When Father says, “*this is my body*,” and, “*this is my blood*,” the bread and wine truly become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ! They are consecrated.

In the *institution narrative*, the power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine Christ’s body and blood, his sacrifice offered on the cross once for all. (CCC 1353)



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WHEN WAS THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST INSTITUTED?

At Last Supper (CCC 1338, 1339). Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us of the Last Supper (the Institution of the Eucharist). Christ ate Passover with His apostles before being handed over to his Suffering and Death (Passion).

IS CHRIST REALLY PRESENT IN THE EUCHARIST?

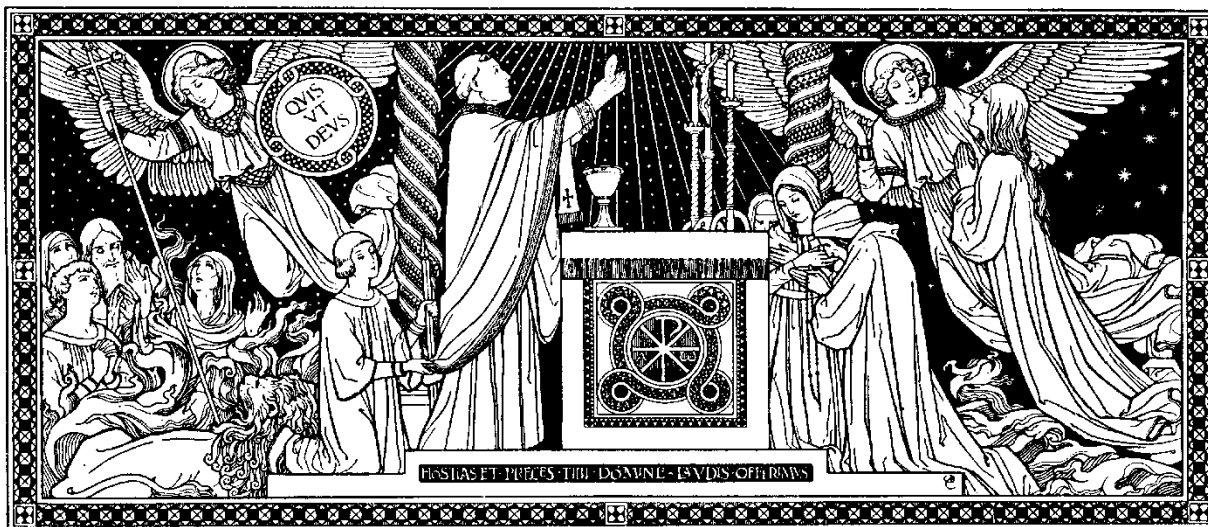
YES! Christ ***really is present*** in the Eucharist! (CCC 1374, 1406, 1410) Even the smallest particle of Consecrated Host or drop of Precious Blood is still Christ! The Eucharistic presence of Christ begins at the moment of the consecration and endures as long as the Eucharistic species subsist. Christ is present whole and entire in each of the species (Host or Precious Blood) and is whole and entire in each of their parts, in such a way that the breaking of the bread does not divide Christ. (CCC 1377) When a Host is broken, there is NOT “less” of Christ. Christ remains whole and entire in each piece and in each drop of Precious Blood. You do not get “more” of Jesus by taking both Communion under both species.

HOW DO WE KNOW THIS?

Because Christ said, “I am the Bread of Life!” (CCC 1388, 1406) Christ calls Himself the bread of life come down from heaven. John 6 tells us of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, which was a foreshadowing of Christ in the Eucharist—there will be enough for all!

HOW DOES THIS CHANGE HAPPEN?

The bread and wine are ***transubstantiated*** (become) the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ at the Consecration during the Sacrifice of the Mass (CCC 1376, 1413). “In the *institution narrative*, the power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine Christ's body and blood, his sacrifice offered on the cross once for all.” (CCC 1353) The Priest holds the bread and says, “This is my Body.” The Priest then holds the chalice with wine and says, “This is my Blood. “[T]he Church asks the Father to send his Holy Spirit on the bread and wine, so that by His power they may become the body and blood of Jesus Christ...” (CCC 1353)



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LITANY OF THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

The text for this litany drawn up by the Sacred Congregation of Rites and promulgated by Pope John XXIII on February 24, 1960. A *partial indulgence* is granted to those who recite this litany.

Lord, have mercy

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven,

*have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

God, the Holy Spirit,

Holy Trinity, One God,

Blood of Christ, only-begotten

Son of the Eternal

Father, **save us.

Blood of Christ, Incarnate

Word of God, **

Blood of Christ, of the New

and Eternal Testament,

**

Blood of Christ, falling upon the earth in the Agony, **

Blood of Christ, shed profusely in the Scourging, **

Blood of Christ, flowing forth in the Crowning with Thorns, **

Blood of Christ, poured out on the Cross, **

Blood of Christ, price of our salvation, **

Blood of Christ, without which there is no forgiveness. **

Blood of Christ, Eucharistic drink and refreshment of souls, **

Blood of Christ, stream of mercy, **

Blood of Christ, victor over demons, **

Blood of Christ, courage of Martyrs, **

Blood of Christ, strength of Confessors, **

Blood of Christ, bringing forth Virgins, **

Blood of Christ, help of those in peril, **

Blood of Christ, relief of the burdened, **

Blood of Christ, solace in sorrow, **

Blood of Christ, hope of the penitent, **

Blood of Christ, consolation of the dying, **

Blood of Christ, peace and tenderness of hearts, **

Blood of Christ, pledge of eternal life, **

Blood of Christ, freeing souls from purgatory, **

Blood of Christ, most worthy of all glory and honor, **

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, O Lord.

You have redeemed us, O Lord, in your Blood. And made us, for our God, a kingdom.

Let us pray: Almighty and eternal God, Thou hast appointed Thine only-begotten Son the Redeemer of the world and willed to be appeased by his blood. Grant, we beg of Thee, that we may worthily adore this price of our salvation and through its power be safeguarded from the evils of the present life so that we may rejoice in its fruits forever in heaven. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

