

LESSON 25: The Eucharist — Why We Worship

Overview

The Eucharist is instituted and offered for the following reasons: (1) The Mass is instituted and offered as an act of praise to the Father; (2) It is instituted and offered as the memorial of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection; (3) it manifests Jesus' deep desire to be with us, in the giving of the true body and bloody of our Lord. The real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is the way in which he is present to us most vividly throughout our life on earth.

Saint Quote

"The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in this sacrament of

love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith, and open to making amends for

the serious offenses and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease." —Pope St. John Paul II

Opening Prayer *Anima Christi*

Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water from Christ's side, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus, hear me. Within Thy wounds hide me. Suffer me not to be separated from Thee. From the malicious enemy, defend me. In the hour of my death, call me. And bid me come unto Thee, That I may praise Thee with Thy saints. And with Thy angels Forever and ever. Amen.

Sacred Scripture *Gospel of John 6:27-40*

Catechism 1356-1381



ISN'T MY PERSONAL PRAYER ENOUGH FOR GOD?

Sometimes we are tempted to think in an either/or mentality instead of a both/and mentality, which is much more the way the Church usually expresses itself. Your personal prayer is absolutely vital to your growing in holiness, in understanding what God desires for you, and obviously is a way in which you honor him. However, the Body of Christ, united to her head, Jesus, is to offer God the Father praise and adoration also, and this is most perfectly expressed in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It unites us as believers with Christ and with each other, and because it is the offering of Christ himself to the Father, we participate in the most perfect form of love and praise not tainted by sin and selfishness, but truly offered by Christ to God for us. Therefore, it is not either personal prayer or communal prayer, but both personal prayer and communal prayer, which finds its perfect expression in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as we enter into it personally and as a community of believers united to Jesus, priest and victim.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME?”

The Institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper recalls the covenant of God with Israel, since it was a Passover meal, and at the same time points towards the New Covenant in the Blood of Christ who was to shortly afterwards suffer his cruel torture and death on the cross. When the Church celebrates the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass we enter into that action and event with the person of Jesus: it is not simply a memory, but rather has the much richer scriptural meaning of “re-presenting”, or reentering into that moment of time and the saving action that Christ wrought through his suffering and death on the cross, which he foreshadowed the night before he was to suffer and die. The commandment of Christ to “do this in memory of me” has been carried out through the ages by his priests, the first of whom were his apostles, and it is Christ himself who continues to act in the Mass as he becomes present to us substantially in the Eucharistic species.

THIS TEACHING IS DIFFICULT. ARE WE REALLY TO BELIEVE THIS?

The words from the Gospel of John, “To whom shall we go, Lord?” once again should remind us that this requires faith. Believing that God would become man, the scandal of the Incarnation, the scandal of the cross—these all defy our human logic, and yet they are truth. That God would come to us under the appearance of bread and wine should not cause us to stumble in our belief, but rather reveals once again the logic of God’s humility and love. To make us eat flesh and drink blood would certainly be an unpleasant experience, and yet our Lord knows we are sensitive creatures, who better believe that which we see and taste and touch and smell, and so in his kindness he comes to us in a form we can truly experience physically and spiritually, without overwhelming us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Does my prayer life include adoration of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament? If not, why?
- Have I ever considered how I approach the Lord in the Eucharist?
- Does the manner in which I receive our Lord reflect my true knowledge of Christ in the Eucharist?
- What are some of the ways that I can grow in my faith in the Eucharist?
- Discernment of your vocation: How does Mary’s Magnificat help you to discern?