

**Follow up from last class:** For something to be a sin we must be aware that it is a sin. God will not hold us accountable to something we don't understand. This is no excuse to live in ignorance. We must strive to know what is good and what is sinful.

### **Review of Chapters 20 and last lesson**

- At baptism and confirmation we receive the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit.
- These two are strengthened at confirmation because we are spiritually more mature.
- We must exercise our spiritual muscles if we want to continue to grow in our spiritual life.
- We grow in our spiritual life through faith, receiving the sacraments, prayer, good works and etc.
- We also learned about the different parts of the Holy Mass. They are:
  - The Introductory Rites
  - The Liturgy of the Word
  - The Liturgy of the Eucharist
  - The Concluding Rites

### **Chapter 21 – The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist**

- Today we'll examine the Holy Eucharist in great detail. **It's the most important of all the Sacraments!**
- After today's lesson you should have a greater understanding of what we believe regarding Holy Communion.
- You should also be able to better explain our belief about the Eucharist to others after today's lesson.
- This teaching of the Holy Eucharist has never changed through the history of the Catholic Church.
- We can easily prove our belief in the Eucharist from the Bible and from history.
- During our last lesson we learned about the different parts of the Holy Mass and how the summit of the Mass is the celebration of the Eucharist.

- Recall that during the un-bloody sacrifice of the Mass we offer up the Body and Blood of Christ to Father.
  - Again, this is not a new sacrifice of Jesus, but the very same timeless sacrifice Jesus offered up more than 2000 years ago.
  - We do not re-sacrifice Jesus during Mass.

## **Jesus, the Bread of Life**

- Recall that in the Book of Exodus God provided the Jews Manna from the sky when they were hungry.
- This was a prefigurement of the Eucharistic.
- We see in the Gospel of John that Jesus was preaching to 5000 people. They had come to hear the Good News of salvation.
- We see from the Gospel of John that while Jesus was preaching it started to get late and people were getting hungry.
- How would 5000 people get feed? Imagine trying to feed 5000 hungry people!!
- The apostle Andrew brought Jesus 5 loaves of bread and a couple of fish. Jesus blessed these and told the apostles to hand them out to the crowd.
- Jesus performed a miracle which provided everyone with food. We see from the Gospel that there was even food left over!
- The people were amazed at this miracle and wanted Jesus to perform this miracle again just like in Exodus.
- Jesus told them that God would provide them with a much greater bread; He was telling them about the Eucharist!
- The word Eucharist comes from a Greek verb meaning to give thanks.
- Jesus went on to tell the people about this bread he would provide:
- *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is bread which comes down from heaven that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.' The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' 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; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed'" (John 6:47-55).*

- We see from this passage that many people were horrified at this teaching that we should eat Jesus' flesh and drink His Blood. They did not understand what Jesus was talking about and that Jesus would turn Bread and Wine into His actual Body and Blood. → The Last Supper
- Many people left Jesus that day because they would not believe this teaching.

### **Jesus Gives us the Holy Eucharist**

- At the Last Supper Jesus kept His promise and fulfilled His teaching.
- We see the Eucharist in the Gospel of Saint Matthew: *"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28)*
- Just as Jesus turned water in wine He turned bread and wine into His Body and Blood.
- The Church has referred to the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist in various ways over time. Some of these are:
  - The Lords Supper
  - Blessed Sacrament
  - Sacrament of the Altar
  - Bread of Life
  - Holy Communion
  - The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
  - Breaking of the Bread
  - Bread of Angels

### **The Sign of the Sacrament**

- Like the other sacraments the Eucharist also has important visible signs.
- These signs are bread and wine. Bread and Wine → Food/Nourishment
  - During and before the time of Jesus Bread and wine were very important parts of the Jewish diet.
  - Even today bread is still a big part of our diet as is wine!

- During the Offertory Prayer “fruit of the earth and work of human hands.....”
  - These two things were important to the health of the body back in the time of the Jews.
  - We can see that The Eucharist is a very important part of our spiritual health! Without it our souls would starve.
- “The bread used in the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharistic Sacrifice must be unleavened, purely of wheat, and recently made so that there is no danger of decomposition. It follows therefore that bread made from another substance, even if it is grain, or if it is mixed with another substance different from wheat to such an extent that it would not commonly be considered wheat bread, does not constitute valid matter for confecting the Sacrifice and the Eucharistic Sacrament. It is a grave abuse to introduce other substances, such as fruit or sugar or honey, into the bread for confecting the Eucharist. Hosts should obviously be made by those who are not only distinguished by their integrity, but also skilled in making them and furnished with suitable tools”. *Taken From: CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENT - Redemptionis Sacramentum*
  - “The wine that is used in the most sacred celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice must be natural, from the fruit of the grape, pure and incorrupt, not mixed with other substances”. *Taken From: CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENT - Redemptionis Sacramentum*

### **The Mystery of the Eucharist**

- At the consecration of the Mass the priest changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus.
- **How does He do this?** Through the power of God which He received at ordination through the Sacrament of Holy Orders.
- The Priest in acting “*In Persona Christi*” in the person of Christ. The Priest offers up the sacrifice given by Jesus on the Cross to the Father. This is important to understand!
- During the consecration the substance of the bread and wine change into the Body & Blood of Christ.
- This change is known as **Transubstantiation**. You must be familiar with this term; it’s important!
- *Trans* (Change), *substantiation*, (substance) → Means to change substance.

- There are three types of change:
  - 1) Change of Appearance: *Green apple turns red → still an apple.*
  - 2) Partial Change: *Oil burns and changes into smoke.*
  - 3) Complete Change: *complete change of substance → The Eucharist*
- At Mass things (Bread and Wine) are changed into Jesus Christ.
- Jesus gave us His Body under the appearance of Bread and Wine.
- When we receive Holy Communion we see and taste bread and wine, but we are really eating the Body of Christ!
- This is why the Eucharist is called the Mystery of Faith. We hear this term during Mass at after the consecration.
- In the Eucharist we have what we call the **Real Presence** which is Jesus' Body and Blood under the appearance of bread and wine.
- The Bread and Wine are not changed into the Body of Blood of Christ for just a short amount of time. They remain the true Body and Blood of our Lord.
- This is why we have a **Tabernacle** in the Church. This is a special place designated for the consecrated Hosts.
- There should also be sanctuary candle present that is lit when the tabernacle contains consecrated hosts. It should be red in color.

### **Receiving the Eucharist**

- How should we receive the Eucharist?
  - 1) **When we receive the sacrament of the Eucharist we must receive it in a state of Grace. This means we must be free from having committed any mortal sins.**
  - 2) We must have fasted from food and drink for one hour before we receive communion.
  - 3) Only Catholics in a state of grace should approach the sacrament.
- When we receive the Eucharist we are actually uniting ourselves to Jesus. We are made one with Jesus.

- The sacred host is to be administered to him or her. However, special care should be taken to ensure that the host is consumed by the communicant in the presence of the minister, so that no one goes away carrying the Eucharistic species in his hand. If there is a risk of profanation, then Holy Communion should not be given in the hand to the faithful. *Taken From:* CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENT - Redemptionis Sacramentum
- **Important!** If we receive the Bread or Wine by themselves we are still receiving the whole body of Christ. It is not necessary to receive the wine (blood) and in fact it's only recently that this has started.

**Question?** *Can we receive communion services at protestant churches and can they receive the Eucharist?*

**Answer:** *No! Catholics must not receive "communion" at protestant churches nor can Protestants receive the Eucharist in our Church.*

- 1) Their "communion" does not contain the true body and blood of Christ.
- 2) If we were to receive protestant communion we are saying that it is the same as our communion. IT IS NOT!! This creates a scandal and diminishes the Catholic teaching.
- 3) Protestants don't believe what we believe about the Eucharist and even if they did they do not have a valid priest to consecrate the bread and wine. Consecration cannot happen outside of Christ's Church.
- 4) Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist unites us in the oneness of the faith. Members of those outside the Catholic Church are not yet fully united to Christ and are ordinarily not admitted to Communion.
- 5) Scripture warns that it is very dangerous for one not believing in the Real Presence to receive Communion: *"For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died"* (1 Cor. 11:29–30).
- 6) The only time a protestant could possibly receive the Eucharist from a priest is if the danger of death is present. Catholic ministers may licitly administer these sacraments to other Christians who do not have full Communion with the Catholic Church provided that they manifest the Catholic faith in these sacraments and are properly disposed. The same requirements apply to them as they do to Catholics receiving the Eucharist. This is uncommon, but is possible.

## Effects of the Holy Eucharist

- When we receive the Eucharist we are uniting ourselves to Christ – we become one with Him.
- We are united to one another and those in Heaven.
- Christ's life within us increases. We become more Holy.
- We will receive a deeper relationship with Jesus in heaven.
- Helps us overcome our faults and sinful desires.
- Helps us to love one another.
- Removes venial sin.
- Remember: If we receive the sacrament of Eucharist in a state of mortal sin we are committing a sacrilege.  
This must be confessed as soon as possible.

***VIDEO: Father Corapi – When we go to Mass (4 minutes)***

### Questions from video:

**Is the Holy Mass a sacrifice?**                      *Yes! The Eucharist contains an element of sacrifice.*

**When the Priest offers Mass who is he acting on behalf of?**                      *Jesus*

**When the priest offers up the Eucharist during Mass what are we to offer up along with the Eucharist?**

*Ourselves*

## **APOLOGETICS – Defending our belief in the Eucharist**

**Objection:** *My church teaches that communion is just a symbol. The Catholic Church's teaching on the Eucharist is wrong. No where does the Bible state the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ. Why do you Catholics believe this?*

**Answer:** *We Catholics believe that during consecration the bread and wine become the real body and blood of Jesus because Jesus, the Bible, sacred tradition, and historical evidence tell us so. We can see from the following bible verses and historical writings that Jesus wasn't using symbolic language when he spoke of the Eucharist.*

"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant of my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

(Last supper) "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."( Luke 22:19-20)

".....The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' 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; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed'" (John 6:47-55). **Although the Jews did not believe they fully understand the intentions behind the words which Jesus spoke. Some of the Jews walked away in disbelief – Jesus did not call them back and tell them His words were symbolic.**

St. Ignatius of Antioch, who was eaten by the beasts in Rome around 107 A.D., wrote: "**The Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ**" (To Smyrna 7:1). St. Justin the martyr wrote around 145 A. D: "**We have been taught that the food is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh**" (Apology 1. 66. 2). Addressed to the Roman Emperor