

**Rite of Christian Initiation  
for Adults**

**Lesson C5  
The Sacrament of the  
Eucharist**

# Opening Prayer

**Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.**

**And kindle in them the fire of your love.**

**Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.**

**And you will renew the face of the earth.**

**Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit you have  
taught the hearts of your faithful.**

**In the same Spirit help us to relish what is right  
and always rejoice in your consolation.**

**We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

# **Symbolon Video**

## **The Eucharist**

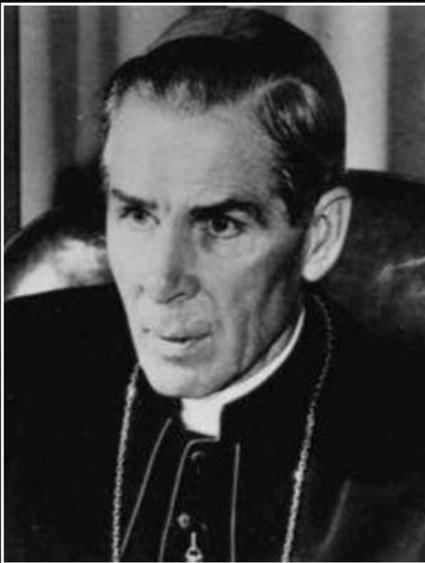
# What is The Eucharist?



The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.” The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch. (CCC 1324)

# What is The Eucharist?

- The word *Eucharist* comes from the Greek word meaning “thanksgiving.” While Scripture does not directly use this term for communion, it is implied in the Last Supper where it says that “after having given thanks” Jesus broke the bread. By the late first or early second century, the Church fathers Ignatius of Antioch and Justin Martyr were referring to the celebration of the “breaking of the bread” with the word *Eucharist*.



The greatest love story of all time is  
contained in a tiny white Host.

— *Fulton J. Sheen* —

AZ QUOTES



# Bethlehem

is a Hebrew word that means

## House of Bread

Mary placed Jesus in a manger,  
a feeding trough for sheep to come and eat.  
Jesus the Good Shepherd calls His sheep  
to eat His Body. Matthew 26:26

Prefiguration  
of the  
Eucharist



# What Does the Church Teach About the Eucharist?

- For 2,000 years, the Catholic Church has taught that Jesus Christ is really and truly present in the Eucharist.
- Under the appearances of bread and wine, Christ is completely present in his body and blood as well as his soul and divinity.
- The moment the priest says the words of consecration... "This is my body" and "This is my blood"... God miraculously changes ordinary bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.
- All the outward appearances and sensible qualities of the bread and wine remain.
- This transformation is called *transubstantiation*.

# What Does the Church Teach About the Eucharist?

- The substance of the bread and wine are changed into the substance of Christ's living body and blood.
- The bread and wine are gone, replaced by the real presence of Christ, while only their appearances remain.
- Jesus is present wholly and entirely in each of the Eucharistic elements as well as in each of its parts.
- The smallest sliver of consecrated host or the tiniest drop from the chalice contains the whole Christ.
- We can receive Jesus under the form of bread alone, under the form of wine alone, or both together.
- In each case, we receive the same perfect sacrament, the same Jesus into our souls.

# What Does the Church Teach About the Eucharist?

- Because Jesus is truly present, we adore the Eucharist as God.
  - That's why we genuflect (or bow deeply) before the tabernacle.
  - That's why the Church reserves the consecrated hosts in tabernacles with such care.
  - That's why the Church carries the consecrated hosts in Eucharistic processions and exposes them for solemn Eucharistic adoration.
- Christ's presence in the Eucharist begins at the moment of consecration and lasts as long as the appearance of bread and wine remain.
- We must be properly disposed and prepared to receive the Eucharist. Which means we must be in a state of grace.
- If we have committed a mortal sin, we cannot receive Holy Communion without first receiving absolution in the sacrament of confession. (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:27-32)

# The Eucharist Prefigured in the Old Testament

- **Melchizedek.** The bread and wine offered by the priest-king Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18) prefigures the bread and wine offered by the eternal priest-king Jesus at the Last Supper. Remember that Hebrews 6:20 calls Jesus “high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”
- **The Paschal Lamb.** Jesus is the new Passover lamb who was sacrificed to take away the sins of the world. The Passover lamb had to be eaten, which is why Jesus gave us his flesh and blood under the form of bread and wine.

# The Eucharist Prefigured in the Old Testament

- **The Manna.** This is one of the clearest symbols of the Eucharist in the Old Testament and one that Jesus expressly applies to himself (John 6: 32-51). The manna from heaven sustained the Israelites throughout their pilgrimage in the desert, but ceased to fall when they entered the Promised Land (Exodus 16:35). Similarly, the Eucharist nourishes us spiritually in this life of pilgrimage, but ceases (as do all the other sacraments) when we enter the promised land of heaven.
- **The Ark of the Covenant.** This holiest of containers in the Old Testament prefigures the tabernacles in our Catholic Churches because it contained three items, each of which prefigures the Eucharist:
  - *The written word of God of tablets* (Exodus 25:16) which prefigures the Living Word (Jesus) contained in the Eucharist.
  - *The jar of manna* (Exodus 16:34). This ordinary bread from heaven prefigures the Eucharist where Jesus, the living bread that came down from heaven, comes to us under the appearances of bread.
  - *The rod of Aaron* (Numbers 17:25). The sign of the true priesthood of the Old Covenant. Aaron's priesthood prefigures the high priesthood of Jesus Christ in the New Covenant.

# The Eucharist Fulfilled in the New Testament

- Jesus fulfills his promise to give his literal flesh and blood as food and drink at the Last Supper when he states: *...This is My Body....This is My Blood.* The New Testament records the Last Supper four times:
  - Matthew 26:26-30
  - Mark 14:22-26
  - Luke 22:14-20
  - 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
- The “bread of life discourse” in chapter 6 of St. John’s gospel is the clearest expression of the doctrine of the Real Presence.
- It is no accident that immediately prior to the Eucharistic discourse (John 6:35-69), Jesus performs one of his most famous miracles:
  - The multiplication of the loaves and feeding of the 5,000.

# The Eucharist Fulfilled in the New Testament

- Jesus teaches very clearly and with no ambiguity that the Eucharist is literally his body and blood and NOT just a symbol.
- *“As a result of this, many [of] his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him.”* (John 6:66)
- They would not have left at this point if Jesus had assured them that he was only speaking symbolically.



# Some Of The Early Church Fathers Regarding The Eucharist

## ■ St. Ignatius of Antioch

- A disciple and co-worker of the Apostle John.
- Third bishop of Antioch, an important center of Christianity in the Apostolic period.
- Around 110 AD, St. Ignatius wrote seven letters to various churches on his way to be martyred in Rome. In his letter to the Smyrnaeans, St. Ignatius describes those who reject the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist as heretics:
- *“Take note of those who hold heterodox opinions on the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us, and see how contrary their opinions are to the mind of God...They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because **they do not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ**, Flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in His goodness, raised up again.”*

# Some Of The Early Church Fathers Regarding The Eucharist

## ■ St. Justin Martyr

- Born about the same time the last Apostle, St. John, died in Ephesus.
- Justin converted in Ephesus around 130 AD, where disciples of St. John undoubtedly instructed him.
- He is considered the greatest Christian apologist of the second century. Around 150 AD, in his famous *Apology* to the Emperor at Rome, St. Justin writes:
- *“We call this food Eucharist; and no one is permitted to partake of it, except one who believes our teaching to be true...**For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by Him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nourished, is both the Flesh and the Blood of that incarnated Jesus.**”*

# Some Of The Early Church Fathers Regarding The Eucharist

## ■ St. Irenaeus

- Bishop of Lyons and lived from 140-202 AD.
- Studied under St. Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John the Apostle.
- Considered the greatest theologian of the immediate post-apostolic period.
- His masterpiece *Against Heresies* completely demolished the heretical views that threatened the post-apostolic Church. Around 195 AD, St. Irenaeus writes:
  - “He [Jesus] has declared the cup, a part of creation, to be **His own Blood**, from which He causes our blood to flow; and the bread, a part of creation, He has established as **His own Body**, from which He gives increase to our bodies.”

# Some Of The Early Church Fathers Regarding The Eucharist

## ■ St. Cyril of Jerusalem

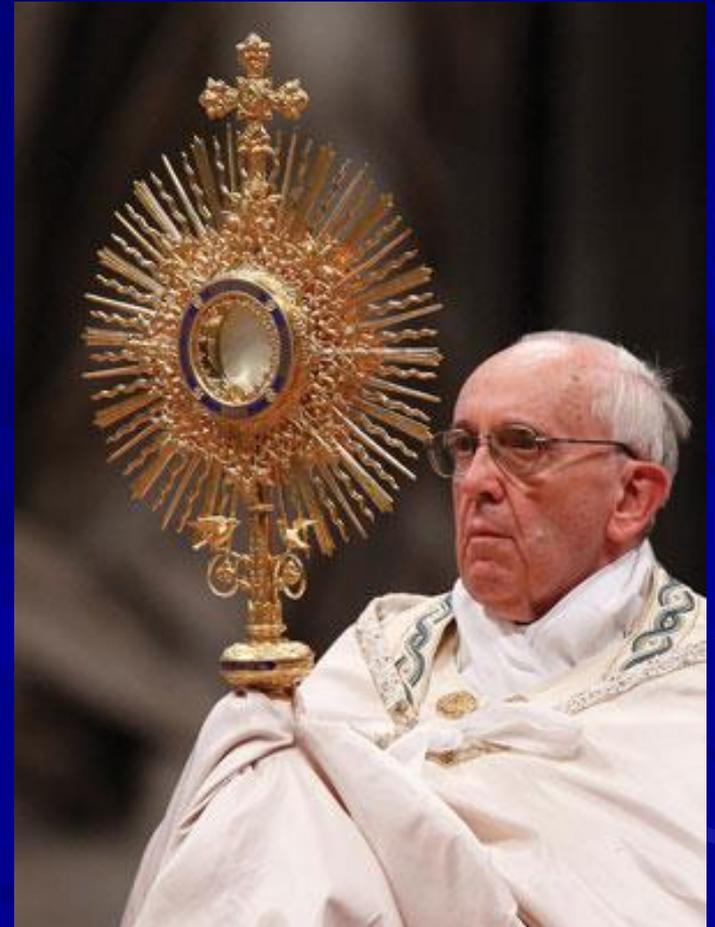
- In a catechetical lecture given in 350 AD, says:
- *“He [Jesus] himself, therefore, having declared and said of the Bread, “This is My Body,” who will dare any longer to doubt? And when He Himself has affirmed and said, “This is My Blood,” who can ever hesitate and say it is not His Blood?”*

- The early Fathers prove that early Christians firmly believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.
- These witnesses are as close as we can get to the apostolic Church.
- Their testimony is irrefutable and unmistakable: the Christian Church believed in the Real Presence from the very beginning.

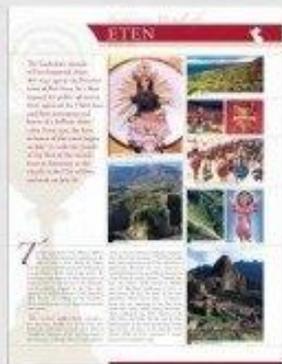
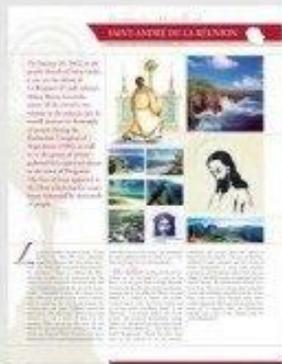
# Ministers of The Eucharist

- Only a validly ordained priest or bishop is able to “confect” the sacrament.
- The “ordinary ministers” for the distribution of the Eucharist are ordained clergy – bishops, priests and deacons.
- A layperson can be commissioned to serve as an “extraordinary minister of holy communion” to help distribute the Eucharist both at Mass and to Catholics not able to attend Mass such as the homebound and those in hospitals or nursing homes.

# Eucharistic Adoration



# The Eucharistic Miracles of the World



*A Vatican International Exhibition*  
**A Vatican International Exhibition**

With an extensive assortment of photographs and historical descriptions, the exhibition presents some of the principal Eucharistic Miracles that took place throughout the ages in various countries of the world and which have been recognized by the Church. The current exhibition includes 153 panels that are used to explain 152 Eucharistic Miracles.

ANY  
QUESTIONS  
?

# Closing Prayer – The 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