

Journey of Faith



The Sacrament of the Eucharist

"The Eucharist can be a complicated mystery to understand," Mrs. Evans said. "Some people believe that the bread and wine are just symbols. Or that the bread and wine don't remain the Body and Blood after Communion. As Catholics, we believe the bread and wine really become the Body and Blood of Jesus."

"But what does it taste like?" asked Tanya.

"Why didn't Jesus just make a different way of sharing himself?" wondered Terrence.

Mrs. Evans said, "Communion still tastes like bread and wine even though it's been transformed. Jesus had a reason for sharing himself in this way. We're going to read about it in Scripture."





What questions do you have about the Eucharist?

The Last Supper of Jesus (adapted from Matthew 26:26–29)

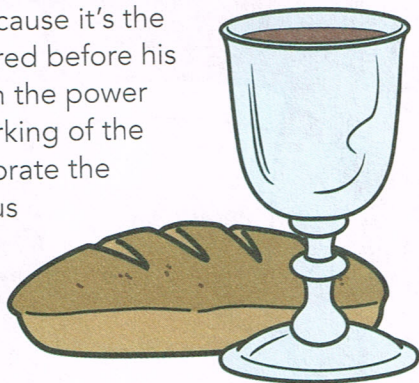
Jesus was at supper with his closest friends. He was sitting near Peter, James, and John. As everyone gathered at the table, Jesus talked about many things. Jesus told his friends about a love that never ends. "You are all my friends," he said.

Then he broke and shared the bread. "This is my body," Jesus said. "It will be given up so all of you may live." Then he filled a cup and said, "This is the blood I shed. My own life will be the best gift I can give."

This made his friends sad, but he told them to be happy. God had planned it this way. "I will come again, and then you all will know that the Son of God is in the world to stay."

We call this biblical event in history the Last Supper because it's the last meal Jesus shared before his crucifixion. Through the power of God and the working of the Holy Spirit we celebrate the Last Supper of Jesus at every Mass.

We call it the **Eucharist**, and it's a holy meal you get to share with Jesus and the whole Church.



Sharing a Special Meal

Sharing a meal together is a way to get to know people better and show we care. Families talk about their days over dinner. When we have friends come in from out of town we invite them over to share a meal. We celebrate holidays by getting together with relatives for a special meal.

List three times you and your family or friends share a meal. Then in one or two sentences explain why that meal is special.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

The Real Presence of Jesus

In the sacrament of the Eucharist, you will receive the Body and Blood of Jesus—just like his disciples at the Last Supper. We know Jesus is really present in the form of bread and wine because Jesus told his disciples, "This is my body." He didn't say, "This is a symbol of my body" or, "This is both my body and blood and bread and wine." The bread and wine truly become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

When the priest calls on the Holy Spirit at Mass, God makes Jesus as present as the person sitting next to us in the pew. What we see and touch points us to a reality that remains invisible. When we eat his Body and drink his Blood, Jesus enters our hearts to help us live in his love.

The Eucharist still looks and tastes like bread and wine even though it's been transformed. That's because its **substance**, what something really is, changes even though its appearance doesn't. We can't explain how this happens, but we believe because Jesus told us it's true. It's a mystery of faith. Only God holds the answer.

The Unbelievable Promise

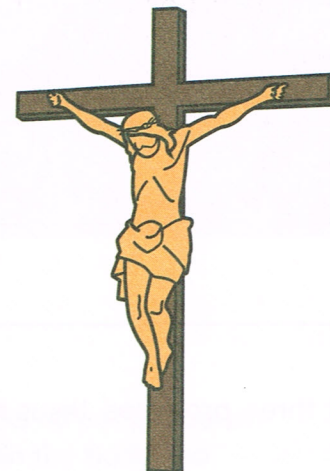
Jesus made a special promise about the Eucharist. One day, when he was teaching a large crowd, he said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever... and I will raise him on the last day" (John 6:51, 54).

Many people didn't understand what Jesus was saying. "This is too hard to believe," they said, and walked away. But the disciples stayed because they believed the promise Jesus made about eternal life. They wanted to be with him forever.

Jesus makes this promise to you, too. If you eat this bread, Jesus' Body, you will live forever with God in heaven.

A Super Kind of Love

After the Last Supper, Jesus did exactly what he promised—he suffered and died on the cross for us. It must have been hard for his Mother and friends to watch his suffering. But imagine their joy when Jesus came back from the dead on Easter! That day they knew the power of Jesus' love. They knew his promise of eternal life would come true.



When we receive the Eucharist at Mass, we remember that Jesus gave his life for us. We remember that his sacrifice gives us eternal life and saves us from death. We remember and thank God for Jesus. Eucharist even means thanksgiving!

Thank you, Jesus!





WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

List three things you learned about the Eucharist today.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List three promises Jesus made about the Eucharist.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

In Short



- The Bible describes the first Eucharist in the Last Supper.
- The Real Presence of Jesus is in the Eucharist.
- We listen for the call to imitate Christ.

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