

## **The Holy Eucharist: Definition**

The Holy Eucharist is a sacrament and a sacrifice. In the Holy Eucharist, under the appearance of bread and wine, the Lord Jesus Christ is contained, offered, and received. The whole Christ is really, truly, and substantially present in the Holy Eucharist. Note: The word "Eucharist" means "Thanksgiving". [Baltimore Catechism, Question #343, p. 200.]

## **When Did Christ Institute the Holy Eucharist?**

About a year before the Last Supper, Our Lord promised to give us the Holy Eucharist. See John 6:48-59. The fulfillment of this promise took place at the Last Supper. It was then that Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist. See Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 [Baltimore Catechism, Question #344, pp. 200-201.]

## **Why Did Jesus Give Us the Holy Eucharist?**

Jesus gave us the Holy Eucharist because He wanted to stay close to His followers until the end of time to teach us, comfort us, strengthen us, and make us holy. [Basic Catechism, p.88.]

Christ gives us His own Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist: first, to be offered as a sacrifice commemorating and renewing for all time the sacrifice of the cross; second, to be received by the faithful in Holy Communion; third, to remain ever on our altars as a proof of His love for us, and to be worshipped by us. [Baltimore Catechism, Question #356]

## **How Is the Eucharist Different from All the Other Sacraments?**

The Eucharist is different from all the other sacraments because, under the appearances of bread and wine, Jesus is completely present as both God and Man. In the other sacraments, He is present only by His power and its effects. [Baltimore Catechism, pp. 88-89] Hence, the Holy Eucharist is often referred to as the Most Blessed Sacrament. [Instructions in the Catholic Faith, p. 93.]

In the Eucharist, Jesus gives the gift of Himself, all that He has, and all that He is. St. Augustine (d. 430) says of the Holy Eucharist: "Though God is all powerful, He is unable to give more; though supremely wise, He knows not how to give more; though vastly rich, He has nothing more to give." [<http://www.acfp2000.com/Sections/sec6.htm>.]

## **What is Eucharistic Adoration?**

It has been the consistent belief of the Catholic Church from the very beginning that bread and wine consecrated at Mass truly become the Body and Blood of Christ; and that, furthermore, as the Catholic Catechism states, this "Eucharistic presence of Christ [which] begins at the moment of the consecration...endures as long as the Eucharistic species subsist." (CC #1377). In other words, the Eucharistic Christ then continues to be present in our midst beyond the Eucharistic liturgy when the consecrated host is either reposed in a tabernacle or exposed on the altar.

## **Why Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament?**

If we can adore the Eucharistic presence of Christ when reposed in a tabernacle, why do we then need to expose the Blessed Sacrament on the altar? It is not essential for exposition to take place to have Eucharistic adoration, yet people report experiencing a greater sense of intimacy with Jesus and attentiveness of mind and heart to prayer when they are able to actually "see" our Eucharistic Lord. More-over, according to Church regulations exposing the Blessed Sacrament for a period of time requires the presence of a sufficient number of people to be there and therefore fosters the commitment needed to establish and sustain a meaningful parish Eucharistic adoration program. But the best reason for having exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is simply that God wills it. During His Eucharistic discourse, Jesus made this unmistakably clear: "Indeed, this is the will of My Heavenly Father, that every-one who looks upon the Son, and believes in Him, shall have eternal life. Him I will raise up on the last day." (John 6:40).