

## Eucharist

- **I heard some say that Catholics worship the right way because we have the Eucharist and the others don't so we're better. Is that true?**

Catholics worship in the manner that is fully open to the will of Christ for His Body, the Church. It is not a question of being better or worse. "All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God (Rom 3:23).

By God's willing it and imparting it, the Catholic Church possesses the fullness of Christ in the profession of the Creed, the celebration of divine worship, especially of the sacraments, and apostolic succession through the sacrament of Holy Orders (CCC 815). We are called to worship the Lord in Spirit and truth. In this regard, we rightly worship God when we worship Him as He taught us especially in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Yes, the Catholic Church has been entrusted with the responsibility and possesses the fullness of the means of Salvation. Nonetheless, elements of holiness and truth do also exist outside of the visible confines of the Catholic Church. It is not a question of better or worse but of the participation in the **fullness** of Christ (especially in Holy Mass) and doing what the Lord asked us to do.

John 6: 53-54 - Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day

Matthew 26:26-27 - While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "**Take and eat**; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "**Drink from it, all of you,**

CCC 1382 The Mass is at the same time, and inseparably, the sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated and the sacred banquet of communion with the Lord's body and blood. But the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice is wholly directed toward the intimate union of the faithful with Christ through communion. To receive communion is to receive Christ himself who has offered himself for us.

CCC 830 "the Church is catholic because Christ is present in her. "Where there is Christ Jesus, there is the Catholic Church." (Unitatis Redintegratio 3) In her subsists the fullness of Christ's body united with its head; this implies that she receives from him "the fullness of the means of salvation"

CCC 819 “Furthermore, many elements of sanctification and of truth” are found outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church: “the written Word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope, and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as visible elements.” Christ’s Spirit uses these Churches and ecclesial communities as means of salvation, whose power derives from the fullness of grace and truth that Christ has entrusted to the Catholic Church. All these blessings come from Christ and lead to him, and are in themselves calls to “Catholic unity.”\

- **How can we truly see the real presence of Christ when the Eucharist just seems, looks, and tastes like bread? I understand it in my head but it is just hard to see. Why doesn't he allow us to feel his presence in a more human, tangible way?**

Jesus ascended that He might be more fully present through the Holy Spirit.

John 16: 7-8 - But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes he will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and condemnation:

Jesus cannot be more present than in the Eucharist:

Eucharist (Real Presence):

**Mark 14:22-24** 22 While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take; **this is my body.**” 23 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. 24 He said to them, “This **is my blood** of the † covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

John 6:51-64 (Three Promises of the Eucharist)

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread **will live forever**; and the bread that I will 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, “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, **you have no life in you.** Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood **have eternal life**, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood **abide in me, and I in them.** Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like

that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

1 Cor 10:16 16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?

1 Cor 11:24-30 “and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for † you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in 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.”

CCC 789 The comparison of the Church with the body casts light on the intimate bond between Christ and his Church. Not only is she gathered around him; she is united in him, in his body. Three aspects of the Church as the Body of Christ are to be more specifically noted: the unity of all her members with each other as a result of their union with Christ; Christ as head of the Body; and the Church as bride of Christ.

CCC 1375 It is by the conversion of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood that Christ becomes present in this sacrament. The Church Fathers strongly affirmed the faith of the Church in the efficacy of the Word of Christ and of the action of the Holy Spirit to bring about this conversion. Thus St. John Chrysostom declares: It is not man that causes the things offered to become the Body and Blood of Christ, but he who was crucified for us, Christ himself. The priest, in the role of Christ, pronounces these words, but their power and grace are God's. This is my body, he says. This word transforms the things offered.

CCC 1400 Ecclesial communities derived from the Reformation and separated from the Catholic Church “have not preserved the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Holy Orders.” It is for this reason that, for the Catholic Church, Eucharistic intercommunion with these communities is not possible. However these ecclesial communities, “when they commemorate the Lord’s death and resurrection in the Holy Supper ... profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and await his coming in glory.”

CCC 787 From the beginning, Jesus associated his disciples with his own life, revealed the mystery of the Kingdom to them, and gave them a share in his mission, joy, and sufferings. Jesus spoke of a still more intimate communion between him and those who would follow him: “Abide in me, and I in you.... I am the vine, you are the branches.” And he proclaimed a

mysterious and real communion between his own body and ours: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.”

- **At what point during the transubstantiation does Jesus enter the Eucharist? And why is a non-Catholic Christian's communion *not* Jesus?**

At what point during the transubstantiation does Jesus enter the Eucharist? - CCC 1377 - The Eucharistic presence of Christ begins at the moment of the consecration and endures as long as the Eucharistic species subsist.

- **Why is a non-Catholic Christian's communion not Jesus?**

It is exactly what they believe it to be - a memorial. CCC 1400 Ecclesial communities derived from the Reformation and separated from the Catholic Church “have not preserved the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Holy Orders.” It is for this reason that, for the Catholic Church, Eucharistic intercommunion with these communities is not possible. However these ecclesial communities, “when they commemorate the Lord’s death and resurrection in the Holy Supper ... profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and await his coming in glory.”

- **When we receive the Eucharist we are receiving the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ. So in a way we are closer to Christ than Peter or the apostles were pre-resurrection. Why is this distinction so important? What is more unique about the Eucharist than seeing Christ in person 2,000 years ago?**

The answer to the question is **in** the question. In the Eucharist we are possessed by Christ in us in an extremely intimate and interior manner possessing fully His body and blood, with His soul and divinity. To the Disciples (they were Apostles after Jesus’ Ascension, our Lord was present in an exterior manner. The Eucharist is an intimate communion with Christ that is unsurpassed in any other way.

CCC 1331 Holy Communion, because by this sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ, who makes us sharers in his Body and Blood to form a single body.

CCC 1365 ... In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he “poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”( Mt 26:28)

CCC 1380 ... In his Eucharistic presence he remains mysteriously in our midst as the one who loved us and gave himself up for us, and he remains under signs that express and communicate this love:

Why is this important?

- We receive true life! John 6:54-55 ... Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood **has eternal life**, and I will raise him on the last day.
- We are truly nourished! John 6:55 - For my flesh is **true food**, and my blood is **true drink**
- We abide in each other – we in Him, He in us! John 6:56 - Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood **remains in me and I in him**.
- We receive eternal life! John 6:58 - This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, **whoever eats this bread will live forever.**

These are the promises fulfilled in partaking of the Eucharist.

- **Can a person become Catholic if he/she struggles with the Church's teaching of the Eucharist (namely, that it is the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus present)?**

We are called to faith, which by definition constitutes “the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

CCC 88 The Church’s Magisterium exercises the authority it holds from Christ to the fullest extent when it defines dogmas, that is, when it proposes, in a form obliging the Christian people to an irrevocable adherence of faith, truths contained in divine Revelation or also when it proposes, in a definitive way, truths having a necessary connection with these.

The laity should, as all Christians, promptly accept in Christian obedience decisions of their spiritual shepherds, since they are representatives of Christ as well as teachers and rulers in the Church. Let them follow the example of Christ, who by His obedience even unto death, opened to all men the blessed way of the liberty of the children of God. (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium 37)

- **In John 6:53, Jesus says that unless man eats His flesh and drinks His blood, he/she has no life within them. What does this mean for our Protestant brothers and sisters who do not believe in, nor receive Jesus in the Eucharist?**

Perhaps the most powerful image that these words have is simply that of the food and drink that sustains our lives. Food is something we all need moment by moment to sustain us. We cannot go long without a drink because liquid is vital for our bodies. Jesus is teaching us that we need to depend on Him utterly, moment by moment, in order to survive.

CCC 1375 It is by the conversion of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood that Christ becomes present in this sacrament. The Church Fathers strongly affirmed the faith of the Church in the efficacy of the Word of Christ and of the action of the Holy Spirit to bring about this conversion. Thus St. John Chrysostom declares: It is not man that causes the things offered to become the Body and Blood of Christ, but he who was crucified for us, Christ himself. The priest, in the role of Christ, pronounces these words, but their power and grace are God's. This is my body, he says. This word transforms the things offered.

John: 6:27 "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you"

6:50-51a "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"

6:53 "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you."

6:54 "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day

What does this mean for our Protestant brothers and sisters who do not believe in, nor receive Jesus in the Eucharist? The Church calls Baptism the Sacrament in which divine life is shared by grace and the Eucharist is the Sacrament in which that divine life is nourished through the abiding presence of Jesus. Therefore our Protestant brothers and sisters receive life through Baptism, but it cannot be nourished.

CCC 1400 Ecclesial communities derived from the Reformation and separated from the Catholic Church, "have not preserved the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Holy Orders." It is for this reason that, for the Catholic

Church, Eucharistic intercommunion with these communities is not possible. However these ecclesial communities, “when they commemorate the Lord’s death and resurrection in the Holy Supper ... profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and await his coming in glory.”

CCC 1271 Baptism constitutes the foundation of communion among all Christians, including those who are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church: “For men who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in some, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church. Justified by faith in Baptism, [they] are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church.” “Baptism therefore constitutes the sacramental bond of unity existing among all who through it are reborn.”

- **What is the significance of Confirmation?**

1285 Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the “sacraments of Christian initiation,” whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace.( Roman Ritual, Rite of Confirmation 1) For “by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.” (LG 11)

- **How does a priest determine penance and why is there a penance?**

Why is there a penance?

CCC 1430 Jesus’ call to conversion and penance, like that of the prophets before him, does not aim first at outward works, “sackcloth and ashes,” fasting and mortification, but at the conversion of the heart, interior conversion. Without this, such penances remain sterile and false; however, interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance.

CCC Glossary - ASCESIS: The practice of penance, mortification, and self-denial to promote greater self-mastery and to foster the way of perfection by embracing the way of the cross.

- **If one does not go to confession once a year and passes away will they go to hell? Is salvation possible?**

Anyone who commits a mortal sin (requiring full knowledge and complete consent), whether once a year, once a week or once a day must immediately seek Reconciliation with God. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, salvation is not just possible but the promise of our Salvation and our hope. “Mortal sin, by attacking the vital principle within us—that is, charity—necessitates a new initiative of God’s mercy and a conversion of heart which is normally accomplished within the setting of the sacrament of reconciliation (CCC 1856). Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the “eternal punishment” of sin (CCC 1472). The Sacrament of Reconciliation is our way back to God’s saving mercy and there “are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss, (CCC 1864).”

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) has been with us from the beginning, coming from the words of Christ Himself: “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” (Jn. 20:21-23). Nowhere are we told to confess our sins to God alone. When we sin, we rupture our relationship not just with God, but with His Body, the Church. So when we apologize, we need to do so to all parties involved — God and the Church. In the confessional, the priest represents God and the Church.

The precept (rule) of the Church — a violation of which is a sin of disobedience to legitimate authority — is binding on all Catholics over the age of reason. You must go to Confession at least once a year if you’re aware of having committed any mortal sin, that is, a grave or serious sin. If you have not committed such a sin, you are not obliged to go to Confession. But unless you already wear a halo, you no doubt have committed lesser venial sins and should go to Confession to be absolved of them and receive the grace of the sacrament to help you avoid occasions of sin.

Can. 989 After having reached the age of discretion, each member of the faithful is obliged to confess faithfully his or her grave sins at least once a year.

“Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church. Indeed, the regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil



tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit.” (CCC 1458)

- **The Catholic Church suggests reconciliation once annually, is that a realistic expectation, for a healthy spiritual life, when should you go and how often, are not most sins forgiven during Mass?**

The only ordinary way to escape the tragic separation from Christ due to mortal sin is by a good Confession.

CCC 1493 One who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the Church, must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience. The confession of venial faults, without being necessary in itself, is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church.

CCC 1496 The spiritual effects of the sacrament of Penance are:

- reconciliation with God by which the penitent recovers grace;
- reconciliation with the Church;
- remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sins;
- remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin;
- peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation;
- an increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle.

CCC 1458 “Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins” is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church. Indeed the regular confession of our venial sins helps us from our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit. By receiving more frequently through this sacrament the gift of the Father’s mercy, we are spurred to be merciful as he is merciful”

Venial Sins may be forgiven during Holy Mass through the penitential rite at the beginning of Mass, and through the reception of Holy Communion:

CCC 1415 Anyone who desires to receive Christ in Eucharistic communion must be in the state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of penance.

CCC 1416 Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ increases the communicant's union with the Lord, forgives his venial sins, and preserves him from grave sins. Since receiving this sacrament strengthens the bonds of charity between the communicant and Christ, it also reinforces the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.

