

OCIA – The Eucharist

Foreshadowing of the Eucharist

Passover: The Hebrews slaughtered a lamb & put the blood on their doorposts. They then had a meal (with specific directions) to complete the act. Thus, they were saved from death & delivered from Egypt.

-When they were free from Egypt, God commanded them to commemorate the Passover Supper every year (Ex. 12:27, 13:8)

-The Passover Supper was a *memorial* – not just remembering the past, but making the past present to recall God’s saving action.

Manna: 6 weeks after the Israelites were delivered from Egypt, they were starving in the desert. So, God gave them manna (mysterious bread from heaven) to keep them alive to make it to the promised land.

-This manna was seen by the Jews as God giving them strength for the journey and always remaining with them.

Jesus’ Last Supper was the Passover Supper.

-Jesus is celebrating the Passover Supper, but He changes it and says “This is my Body...This is my Blood...”

-Jesus, the “Lamb of God” is becoming the sacrifice that will deliver the people from slavery.

-Jesus commands the Apostles: “Do this in memory of me.”

-He is commanding them to celebrate this new “supper” – the Mass!

The Eucharist is the new Manna.

-Just as God gave the Israelites food to strengthen them to get to the Promised Land, Jesus gives us the Eucharist to strengthen us to get to our Eternal Promised Land.

-“I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.” (Jn. 6:48)

The Eucharist in Scripture

The Last Supper

-Matthew 26:26-28 – “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, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.”

-Luke 22:19-20 – “Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.”

-Mark 14:22-24 – “While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take it; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and

gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.”

John 6:30-68 – St. John is “filling in” those theological concepts that the others left out.

- Jesus is very clearly telling the Jews that they must eat Him in order to have eternal life.
- The Jews question Him on this & He doubles down: he uses a stronger word for “eat” (literally, “to gnaw/munch”) and repeats what He said.
- Because the Jews understood what He meant (literally, “eat my Body”), many left Him. Yet, Jesus doesn’t run after them and correct their understanding.

The Mass – The “Source and Summit”

The Mass continues into the Early Church

- 1 Cor 11:23-25 – “For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, “This is my body that 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 in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”
- St. Paul “received” this teaching (lit., “tradition”) – to celebrate the Mass!
- Acts 2:42 – “They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, **to the breaking of the bread** and to the prayers.”

What happens at Mass?

- Christ, in the form of the priest, is offering Himself to the Father in atonement for our sins.
- In response, the Father pours out blessings upon us & gives us the Body of His Son!
- Mass is making Calvary – the one sacrifice of Jesus – present here & now.
- Transubstantiation: the bread and wine are changed per se into Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus.

Why go to Mass?

- Because of Christ’s death & resurrection, we are part of the Body of Christ. The Mass is the most powerful way to “live in His Body.”
- We owe worship to God, and the Mass is the *perfect* worship of God.
- God loves you & wants to shower His love on you in the Mass.

How to Pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament

- 1) Start by just calling to mind the Presence of Christ.
- 2) Think of how He delights in you.
 - Try to imagine Him looking at you with love, smiling at you.
- 3) Tell Him you love Him.
 - Even if it’s imperfect, just tell Him about how you think of Him.
- 4) Tell Him whatever is most bothering you.
- 5) Just look at the Eucharist and say His name with Love.
 - It’s always good to pray with Scripture in front of the Eucharist!

The Eucharist as Presence

- A primary way in which Jesus has chosen to remain with us in the Eucharist.
- “I will not leave you orphans...” (Jn. 14:18)
- “Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age...” (Mt. 28:20)

The Eucharist is not merely symbolic

Evidence from Scripture:

- a) Jn 6, as discussed above.
- b) 1 Cor 11 – St. Paul is laying out the gravity of receiving the Eucharist unworthily, which would not be of importance if the Eucharist were merely a symbol.
 - “Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord.”
(1 Cor 11:27)

Evidence from the Early Church:

- a) The Didache – a compilation of the teachings of the Apostles from 90 AD – gives specific instructions on the celebration of the Mass and the reality of the Eucharist.
- b) St. Ignatius of Antioch (110 AD) – Disciple of St. John the Apostle and St. Polycarp
 - “I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the Bread of God, WHICH IS THE FLESH OF JESUS CHRIST.”
 - “They [i.e. the Gnostics] abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess that THE EUCHARIST IS THE FLESH OF OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.”
- c) St. Justin Martyr (100 – 165 AD)
 - “We call this food Eucharist; and no one else is permitted to partake of it, except one who believes our teaching to be true and who has been washed in the washing which is for the remission of sins and for regeneration [Baptism], and is thereby living as Christ has enjoined. 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.”
 - Receiving the Eucharist is also a sign of communion (union) with the beliefs of the Catholic Church. Therefore, those who are not in union should not receive.