

## LESSON ON THE EUCHARIST

### Part 1: History of the Eucharist

We are going back to Exodus and Moses. If you recall, the Israelites were slaves in Egypt for 400yrs. God sent plagues so that the Pharaoh would release the Israelites but he wouldn't. Finally, the night of the final plague, when all the first born of the Egyptians were killed, God asked the Israelites to take a lamb, slaughter it and put the blood on their doorstep and the angel would "Passover" their home and not kill their first born child. That night, the first-born of Egypt died and the Israelites left Egypt. God saved them from slavery. He saved them to go and WORSHIP him.

Each year the Jewish people remember this huge event when God saved them from the Egyptians and set them free. To honor the feast of "Passover" they would have a special meal with foods that told about the time as slaves. They had unleavened bread because in their flight from Egypt there was no time to let the bread rise. They would sacrifice a lamb as an **offering for their sins** and they would share multiple toasts of wine. They aren't just remembering this event, they are partaking in the actual original Passover with Moses. This feast is still celebrated by our Jewish brothers and sisters today. This type of celebration is called **Anamnesis**- partaking in an event that is outside of time.

The Eucharist: The night of the first Mass, the night that Jesus gave us the Eucharist, the Last Supper, he was celebrating the feast of Passover with his disciples. Jesus' Passover celebration was different because there was no **lamb**. **Who is the sacrificial lamb that gave its life for the sins of the people?** Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. So there was no lamb, but instead, there was the **Lamb of God**. Jesus was the sacrificial lamb who gave his life for our sins. Jesus was the one offering the sacrifice as the high priest and Jesus was the sacrifice. Jesus took the unleavened bread, broke it and said "take and eat; this is my body. Then he took a cup gave thanks and gave it to them saying "drink from it for this is my blood of covenant which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins". So Jesus is telling his disciples to take and eat and drink from the bread and wine which he **clearly says are his body and blood**. Following this event, Jesus physically gives up his life on the cross. He is the sacrificial lamb.

Like our Jewish brothers and sisters, we enter into that Holy Thursday, last supper with Jesus each time we celebrate the Mass. Jesus isn't being sacrificed over and over, we are partaking in that original sacrifice on the cross. Anamnesis. Like the apostles, we receive Jesus' body and blood.

**Real Presence**- where do we get this idea that Jesus is truly present in the bread and wine and that once the consecration takes place that it is truly Jesus and no longer just bread and wine? Why don't we think it's just a symbol? Why can't you just use little crackers and grapejuice? Many reasons. One, Jesus was Jewish. Jews had many restrictions on what they could and couldn't eat. They couldn't eat animals that still had blood in them. They believed that the life of the animal was contained in the blood so if they were to eat meat that still had blood in it, they would take on the life of the animal, and become the animal so to speak. SO when Jesus said drink my blood, it was very clear to the disciples what he was saying- his life is in his blood and they are to take on Jesus' life.

You cannot use crackers or grapejuice because we are partaking in the one sacrifice that Jesus made. Jesus used unleavened bread and Jesus used wine. So the ingredients in this sacrament are just that-

unleavened bread and wine and anything else will not change into his body and blood. Each crumb and each drop of the Eucharist are Jesus.

Another reason we believe that Jesus is truly present in the bread and wine is simple, Jesus told us so. It's unmistakably clear when he says "this is my body; this is my blood".

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## LESSON PART 2

**WHY?** Why do we receive the Eucharist? Why would Jesus leave this for us and ask us to eat his body and blood?

One reason we just talked about, by eating his body and drinking his blood we take on his life. We become more and more like Jesus.

Jesus tells us A LOT in the gospel of John. If ever you are doubting the real presence in the Eucharist or trying to defend this belief to protestant friends, read **John ch 6**: John 6: 53-58- **"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him."** What does that mean? It is VERY clear, its just what he says.

Another reason we EAT the Eucharist is **communion** with God and others. Now the first half of the year we studied theology of the body. A big part of TOB is the teachings on marriage and sexuality. We barely touched the surface of this teaching. **Review**: When a man and woman marry, after the ceremony what **MUST** they do in order to complete or consummate their wedding vows? Sexual intercourse. When a husband and wife have sex, they physically become ONE flesh as they spiritually became ONE in their wedding ceremony. It seals the deal. The love between a husband and wife is so real, so powerful, so profound, so holy that it can create NEW life and give birth to children. That's why having sex is also called making love. Their love takes on physical form. Each and every time they sexually come together, the gift is to be TOTAL, FREE, FAITHFUL, FRUITFUL. That's what is promised in the wedding vows.

Now God uses MARRIAGE in the bible more than anything else to help us understand God's LOVE for US. The vows of marriage, the sexual embrace is to be total, free, faithful, fruitful and this is to point us to God's love which is: total free faithful fruitful. The love of a husband and a wife is meant to mirror the trinitarian love. The love of the father and son is so real, so powerful, so profound, so holy that it produces life, it produces the holy spirit!

Where am I going? God uses the marital analogy to help us understand his love for us. **Where do we become ONE flesh with God? IN THE EUCHARIST!** "remains in me and I in him". The Eucharist is the "sacramental consummation" of the spiritual (mystical) marriage between Christ and the Church. This is when you unite w/ GOD and become ONE. When we become one with God, like a bride, we conceive new life in us, GODS life.

Unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood you have no life in you. john6:53 One who feeds on me will have life because of me.

When we receive Jesus in the Eucharist we become one with Jesus. We also become one w/ all those who are receiving the Eucharist around the world and who are in Heaven. The Eucharist unites the Communion of Saints together. So if you have lost someone you love, when you receive the Eucharist you are actually closer to them than ever before.

Why is weekly Sunday Mass an obligation as Catholics? I think a better question is, what do you have to do that's more important for your life today and for your life eternally than becoming one with Jesus himself? There is literally nothing more important than that, ever and everything we do should be arranged around that. Because if we believe in Jesus and we believe what Jesus has clearly told us, then what could possibly keep us from him? Jesus told us to do this in remembrance of him. He told us to. The more we receive him, the more we become like him.