



## Source and Summit

### Social Media Posts

The Eucharist is the source of our lives as Catholic Christians. In the Eucharist, we are formed as Christ's people and nourished to live as disciples in the world. We come to the source and are sent forth in mission.

The Eucharist is the summit of the Christian life. It is the high point from we find direction and perspective. When we orient our lives with Eucharist as the summit, the rest of our lives take shape. The Eucharist becomes our reference point from which our daily decisions and actions come into focus with Christ at the center of our lives.

In the Eucharist, we receive the Lord, are formed and nourished and made ready to live as followers of Jesus Christ in the course of our daily lives. When we think about it in this way, being sent out is part of the purpose in our coming to Mass in the first place.

"Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows." – Vatican II

"The liturgy, in itself, is not only spontaneous prayer, but something more and more original: it is an act that founds the whole Christian experience and, therefore, also prayer. It is event, it is happening, it is presence, it is encounter. It is an encounter with Christ." -Pope Francis

"A Christianity without a liturgy, I dare say, is perhaps a Christianity without Christ. Without Christ in full. Even in the sparest rite, such as that which some Christians have celebrated and continue to celebrate in places of incarceration, or in the seclusion of a house during times of persecution, Christ is truly present and gives Himself to His faithful." -Pope Francis

## Bulletin Articles

Are you coming or going? **April 16-17**

Do you ever wonder if you are coming or going? Most of us have the sense sometimes that life is too hurried, harried, and unfocused. We pause at the end of a day or a week and are not sure what just happened, or if any of it mattered. We need a source of peace and purpose to lead us to what is most important and give us greater meaning in life.

In the Eucharist, we come and go in a different way. We come to Mass with gratitude - the word Eucharist means to be thankful. We experience Christ's presence in the Word of God proclaimed in the readings, in all who have gathered, in the priest who is in the person of Christ among us, and especially in the bread and wine which become Christ's Body and Blood.

The Eucharist is the source of our lives as Catholic Christians. In the Eucharist, we are formed as Christ's people and nourished to live as disciples in the world. We come to the source and are sent forth in mission.

What is the high point of your life?

Have you ever climbed a hill or mountain, and from the top, suddenly found perspective? Or perhaps you recall a particular experience that was a high point for you, a time after which life will never be the same. These summits or high points become a reference point for us. In those moments, our lives come into focus and our future direction is clearer, filled with greater hope and strength.

The Eucharist is the summit of the Christian life. It is the high point from we find direction and perspective. When we orient our lives with Eucharist as the summit, the rest of our lives take shape. The Eucharist becomes our reference point from which our daily decisions and actions come into focus with Christ at the center of our lives.

Perhaps we do not always think about this, but every Mass is an opportunity to encounter Jesus. We meet the Lord in the celebration of the Eucharist, and surely having done so, our lives will never be the same.

Are you ready?

We often speak of “going to Mass” like the way we go to a concert, movie, or theater performance. Even though we know that the Eucharist is not a performance, it may be hard to put into words what we do at the Mass. And as long as we think of ourselves as going to Mass, we limit the ways the Eucharist may shape us as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our role in the Eucharist is much more about participation than about watching. It’s like the difference between watching a sporting match and actually playing the game. We are called to full, conscious, and active participation in the Eucharist—we are to open our minds, hearts, and spirit, ready to be changed, to become more like Christ.

When we truly participate in the Eucharist, we allow Christ to speak to us, be joined in sacrifice, and be nourished in Holy Communion. We are drawn to communion with Christ and each other. Through this encounter with the Lord, we are renewed. We do not simply go to Mass. We take part. And our participation changes us for the better.

Get out!

Have you ever visited family or friends and reached a point when you knew it was time to leave? It is not that you have overstayed your welcome, but simply that the hour has become late, vacation has come to an end, or your visit has reached its natural conclusion. We might imagine our host saying, “Get out! I need to get to bed!” or you might find yourself saying, “I really have to get going.”

At the end of Mass, we are told to get out. Not that our host, the Lord himself, is tired of us and wants us out of his house, but rather, that the natural conclusion to our participation in the Eucharist is to be sent out in mission. We are to go out, “glorifying the Lord” by our lives. In the Eucharist, we receive the Lord, are formed and nourished and made ready to live as followers of Jesus Christ in the course of our daily lives. When we think about it in this way, being sent out is part of the purpose in our coming to Mass in the first place.



# The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

## Social Media Posts

“Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister...but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments...He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them’” -Vatican II

“Besides physical hunger, man experiences another hunger, a hunger that cannot be satiated with ordinary food. It’s a hunger for life, a hunger for love, a hunger for eternity. And the sign of manna — like the entire experience of Exodus — also contains in itself this dimension: it was the symbol of a food that satisfies this deep human hunger.” -Pope Francis

“Jesus gives us this food, rather, He himself is the living bread that gives life to the world. His Body is the true food in the form of bread; his Blood is the true drink in the form of wine. It isn’t simple nourishment to satisfy the body, like manna; the Body of Christ is the bread of the last times, capable of giving life, eternal life, because this bread is made of love.” -Pope Francis

“When the disciples on the way to Emmaus asked Jesus to stay ‘with’ them, he responded by giving them a much greater gift: through the Sacrament of the Eucharist he found a way to stay ‘in’ them. -Pope St. John Paul II

“Receiving the Eucharist means entering into a profound communion with Jesus. ‘Abide in me, and I in you’ (Jn 15:4). This relationship of profound and mutual ‘abiding’ enables us to have a certain foretaste of heaven on earth.” -Pope St. John Paul II

"Receiving the Eucharist means adoring him whom we receive. Only in this way do we become one with him, and are given, as it were, a foretaste of the beauty of the heavenly liturgy." -Pope Benedict XVI

"The personal relationship which the individual believer establishes with Jesus present in the Eucharist constantly points beyond itself to the whole communion of the Church and nourishes a fuller sense of membership in the Body of Christ." - Pope Benedict XVI

"Contemplation is a gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus. 'I look at him and he looks at me': this is what a certain peasant of Ars used to say to his holy curé [St. Jean Vianney] about his prayer before the tabernacle." -*Catechism of the Catholic Church*

## Bulletin Articles

You Are What You Eat

April 10, 2022

Most of us remember from our childhood using this phrase in fun. However, this expression describes well our experience of Holy Communion. When we consume earthly food, it is absorbed into our system, digested, converted into energy or waste; our food becomes part of us. Yet when we receive Holy Communion, we become united with Jesus Christ so much that we truly become what we receive. Jesus became human so that we might become divine, and in the Eucharist, we truly gain a share in God's own life.

A Real Symbol

April 10, 2022

We believe that the Holy Eucharist is both real AND a symbol. Of course we believe that Jesus Christ – God's own Son – is *really and truly* present in the consecrated bread and wine. But this is also a *symbol*, pointing beyond our earthly experience towards a union with Christ that is impossible to explain this side of heaven. All sacraments are outward signs of an invisible grace, the working of God in our lives. This real symbol is an effective sign. This holy meal is truly a Communion with God.

Take and Drink

Catholics believe that we encounter God above all in sacramental signs. In Holy Communion, we share in God's own life through the sacrament of Jesus' own Body

and Blood. Even though we receive the “whole Christ” – body, blood, soul, and divinity – when we receive Communion under the form of bread alone, receiving Communion also from the chalice is a more complete participation in the Eucharist. In the sign of consecrated wine we see Jesus’ blood outpoured for us and are challenged to drink the common cup with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

#### Christ Present in the Word

“It is truly Christ who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church,” teaches the Church. Since Vatican II, it is normal for a Liturgy of the Word to accompany the celebrations of sacraments. The Church has also strengthened the relationship of Word and Eucharist (made visible in the placing of the Book of the Gospels upon the altar), developing a 3-year cycle of readings to be used for Sunday Mass. The Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass sums it up in this way: “In the hearing of God’s word the Church is built up and grows...past works in the history of salvation are presented anew as mysterious realities.”

#### Christ Present in Bread and Wine

We believe that through the power of the Holy Spirit and the prayer of the Church, bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the priest, praying with and for the people, makes the sacrifice of the cross real again by taking the bread and wine, asking God to bless it, then breaking the bread, and sharing it. Just as the apostles ate and drank at the Last Supper, we all eat and drink to be nourished to continue Christ’s saving work in the world. The Eucharistic Prayer is the center and heart of the whole Mass, and in it, the Church gives thanks to God for the whole work of salvation.

#### Christ Present in Ministry

Among the many ways Christ is present at Mass is in the ministry of the ordained priest who leads the assembly in the celebration. Praying with and in the name of the community gathered, the priest acts in the person of Christ, the Head of the Church (*in persona Christi capitis ecclesiae*) in the celebration of the Eucharist. Each Mass is an action of the whole Church: hence included in every Eucharistic Prayer are prayers for the Church, for the pope, and for the local bishop. And, throughout the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest prays on behalf and as part of the community, in the plural person: “Let us give thanks...We come to you with praise

and thanksgiving..." Through the deacon and other ministers, we encounter Jesus Christ who came to serve.

### Christ Present in the Church at Prayer

While Christ is truly present at Mass in the Word proclaimed, the Eucharistic bread and wine, and in the ministry of the priest, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of Vatican II affirmed that Christ is present "when the Church prays and sings, for he promised: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.'" Mass is not a "spectator sport", in which the priest performs and the people merely watch. The celebration of the Mass - Word and Eucharist - requires the participation of all the faithful because we are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." Through texts in the language of the people, music accessible to the assembly, and a fuller understanding of what we do, we are all called to engage fully each and every Sunday in this most holy liturgy.



## Sunday: Day of the Lord

### Social Media Posts

Keep holy the Lord's Day!

The Lord's Day has always been accorded special attention in the history of the Church because of its close connection with the very core of the Christian mystery. It is Easter which returns week by week, celebrating Christ's victory over sin and death, the fulfilment in him of the first creation and the dawn of the new creation. – Pope St. John Paul II

Sunday is the day which recalls in grateful adoration the world's first day and looks forward in active hope to "the last day", when Christ will come in glory and all things will be made new. – Pope St. John Paul II

“On Sunday, our participation in the Eucharist has special importance. Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world. Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, the 'first day' of the new creation, whose first fruits are the Lord's risen humanity, the pledge of the final transfiguration of all created reality.” – Pope Francis

“Rest opens our eyes to the larger picture and gives us renewed sensitivity to the rights of others. And so the day of rest, centered on the Eucharist, sheds its light on the whole week, and motivates us to greater concern for nature and the poor.” – Pope Francis

For the Christian, Sunday is above all an Easter celebration, wholly illumined by the glory of the Risen Christ. It is the festival of the 'new creation'. – Pope St. John Paul II

In the first place, therefore, Sunday is the day of rest because it is the day "blessed" by God and "made holy" by him, set apart from the other days to be, among all of them, 'the Lord's Day'. – Pope St. John Paul II

At Sunday Mass, Christians relive with particular intensity the experience of the Apostles on the evening of Easter when the Risen Lord appeared to them as they were gathered together. – Pope St. John Paul II

Sunday is not only the day of faith but is also the day of Christian hope. – Pope St. John Paul II

“Therefore, if we wish to rediscover the full meaning of Sunday, we must rediscover this aspect of the life of faith. Certainly, Christian joy must mark the whole of life, and not just one day of the week. But in virtue of its significance as the day of the Risen Lord, celebrating God's work of creation and "new creation", Sunday is the day of joy in a very special way, indeed the day most suitable for learning how to rejoice and to rediscover the true nature and deep roots of joy.” – Pope St. John Paul II

“Since Sunday is the weekly Easter, recalling and making present the day upon which Christ rose from the dead, it is also the day which reveals the meaning of time. It has nothing in common with the cosmic cycles according to which natural religion and human culture tend to impose a structure on time, succumbing perhaps to the myth of eternal return. The Christian Sunday is wholly other!” – Pope St. John Paul II

## **Bulletin Articles**

### Sunday: The First of Days

From the days of the apostles, the Christian community has set Sunday apart from the other days. At first, it was the day of worship on which the first Christians gathered for the “breaking of the bread”. Over time it also became the official day of rest in civic life. This yoking of worship and rest has shaped the rhythm of the week for much of Western civilization to this day.

### Sunday Funday

In a 1998 apostolic letter to the Church, *Dies Domini* (“The Day of the Lord”), Pope St. John Paul II offers a few ways to understand how Christians should approach Sunday. “Sunday is the day of joy and the day of rest precisely because it is ‘the Lord's Day’, the day of the Risen Lord.” (82). The popular cultural expression

“Sunday Funday” is only truly possible because our joy and rest (and truly our “fun”) derive from our life in Jesus Christ.

#### Sunday: Day of the Lord

It was on the 7th day that God rested and so too should we. But this rest isn't simply for its own sake: God rested on the 7th day to reflect upon what had been created and to affirm its goodness. Sunday is our opportunity reflect upon our past week, our successes and failures at discipleship, and to bring our life to the altar of God at Mass.

#### Sunday: Day of Days

Sunday is the first and last day of the week, just as Christ is both alpha and omega, beginning and end. Jesus' resurrection on “the first day of the week” gives us all the reason we need to mark Sunday as holy. As the eighth day, Sunday also reminds us of the goal of eternal life...something to ponder in quiet moments on a restful Sunday

#### Sunday: Day of the Eucharist

While the celebration of Mass on Sunday is not different than on other days, because the entire Church comes together and because it is celebrated on the day of the Resurrection, the Sunday Eucharist is the center of life in the Christian community. Our parish gathers each and every Sunday to celebrate the Eucharist, to give thanks for all the gifts God has given to us!



# Obligation: Law and Love

## Social Media Posts

“Since the Eucharist is the very heart of Sunday, it is clear why, from the earliest centuries, the Pastors of the Church have not ceased to remind the faithful of the need to take part in the liturgical assembly. ‘Leave everything on the Lord's Day’, urges the third century text known as the *Didascalia*, ‘and run diligently to your assembly, because it is your praise of God. Otherwise, what excuse will they make to God, those who do not come together on the Lord's Day to hear the word of life and feed on the divine nourishment which lasts forever?’” -Pope St. John Paul II

“Even if in the earliest times it was not judged necessary to be prescriptive, the Church has not ceased to confirm this obligation of conscience, which rises from the inner need felt so strongly by the Christians of the first centuries. It was only later, faced with the half-heartedness or negligence of some, that the Church had to make explicit the duty to attend Sunday Mass...” -Pope St. John Paul II

“The precept of the Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: ‘On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass.’” -*Catechism of the Catholic Church*

“The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor. Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.” -*Catechism of the Catholic Church*

“We do not go to Mass in order to give something to God, but to receive what we truly need from him. We are reminded of this by the Church's prayer, which is addressed to God in this way: ‘although you have no need of our praise, yet our thanksgiving is itself your gift, since our praises add nothing to your greatness but profit us for salvation’.” -Pope Francis

“Why do we go to Mass on Sundays? It is not enough to respond that it is a precept of the Church; this helps to preserve its value, but alone does not suffice. We Christians need to participate in Sunday Mass because only with Jesus’ grace, with his living presence within us and among us, can we put his commandment into practice, and thus be his credible witnesses.” –Pope Francis

“The life of faith is endangered when we lose the desire to share in the celebration of the Eucharist and its commemoration of the paschal victory. Participating in the Sunday liturgical assembly with all our brothers and sisters, with whom we form one body in Jesus Christ, is demanded by our Christian conscience and at the same time it forms that conscience.” -Pope Benedict XVI

“To lose a sense of Sunday as the Lord's Day, a day to be sanctified, is symptomatic of the loss of an authentic sense of Christian freedom, the freedom of the children of God. Sunday thus appears as the primordial holy day, when all believers, wherever they are found, can become heralds and guardians of the true meaning of time. It gives rise to the Christian meaning of life and a new way of experiencing time, relationships, work, life and death.” –Pope Benedict XVI

“We need to remember that it is Sunday itself that is meant to be kept holy, lest it end up as a day ‘empty of God.’” – Pope Benedict XVI

## **Bulletin Articles**

### Gratitude

We are obligated to participate in the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. It might seem odd to be obligated to attend a celebration, so what is this all about? It may help to first think about where the obligation comes from. We are blessed with life, salvation, faith, gifts, and resources, and all these many blessings come from God. Out of gratitude, we come to the Eucharist - the word means thanksgiving - and with grateful hearts, we celebrate Christ’s presence among us. Our obligation, then, comes from deep within ourselves as we make Christ and the Eucharist the center of our lives. In Christ, we are offered life to the full. In the Eucharist, we are formed and nourished by Christ to live as his people. That is a reason to celebrate!

## Love

Think about the things you do out of love for another. Parents get up in the middle of the night to feed or console their children. Adults care for their aging parents. Siblings and good friends stop everything in order to support their loved one through a difficult moment. We might say that we are obligated to do these things, not because someone tells us we must, but because we cannot imagine doing anything else. The obligation is our loving response which shows the importance of the person in our lives and our gratitude for him or her. This is a helpful way to think about our obligation to participate in Sunday Mass. We come to the Eucharistic feast, not only because the Church tells us we must, but as a response to the astounding love of God which is shown and shared through Jesus Christ.

## House Rules

Let's be honest. There are moments when we may be inclined to stay home, lingering in leisure or distracted by the swirl of weekend activities rather than participating in Sunday Eucharist. We may rationalize our desire for creature comforts as we ignore our conscience's call to get ourselves to Mass. This is why the Church has established the Sunday obligation to attend Mass. Like parents who establish house rules in order to form a child to responsible adulthood, the Church establishes rules that lead us to spiritual maturity, which is expressed in willing participation in the Eucharist. The Sunday obligation may feel like an imposition from the outside, rather than what it is—a call for us to do what is best for us.

## Participate and Celebrate

We often say we are "going" to Mass. When we truly celebrate the Eucharist, we do more than simply come to Mass. We are not to be passive spectators, but active participants. We listen, speak, sing, stand, sit, kneel, eat. And through our participation, we are changed. Pope Francis recently said, "The prayer of the Christian makes the sacramental presence of Jesus his or her own. What is external to us becomes part of us...The Mass is always celebrated, and not only by the priest who presides over it, but by all Christians who experience it. And the center is Christ! All of us, in the diversity of gifts and ministries, join in His action, because He, Christ, is the Protagonist of the liturgy." (February 2, 2021) Through our active participation in the Eucharist, particularly in receiving Christ's Body and Blood in Holy Communion, we become more like Christ and are strengthened to live as Christ's people in the world.



# Presence: Physical vs. Virtual

## Social Media Posts

"Blessed are those who dwell in your house! They never cease to praise you." -  
Psalm 84

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be...And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth." -John 1:1-14

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion.

"We too are gathered round the table of the Lord, the table of the Eucharistic sacrifice, in which he once again gives us his Body and makes present the one sacrifice of the Cross. It is in listening to his word, in nourishing ourselves with his Body and his Blood that he moves us on from being a multitude to being a community, from anonymity to communion. The Eucharist is the sacrament of communion that brings us out of individualism so that we may follow him together, living out our faith in him." -Pope Francis

Just as the term 'Church' refers to the living temple, God's People, the term 'church' also has been used to describe "the building in which the Christian community gathers to hear the word of God, to pray together, to receive the sacraments, and celebrate the eucharist.

The church building is both the house of God on earth (*domus Dei*) and a house fit for the prayers of the saints (*domus ecclesiae*). Such a house of prayer must be expressive of the presence of God and suited for the celebration of the sacrifice of Christ, as well as reflective of the community that celebrates there.

Churches are never 'simply gathering spaces but signify and make visible the Church living in a particular place, the dwelling of God' among us, now reconciled and united in Christ. As such, the building itself becomes a sign of the pilgrim Church on earth and reflects the Church dwelling in heaven.

Every church building is a gathering place for the assembly, a resting place, a place of encounter with God, as well as a point of departure on the Church's unfinished journey toward the reign of God.

"Almighty ever-living God, pour out your grace upon this place and extend the gift of your help to all who call upon you, that the power of your word and of the Sacraments may strengthen here the hearts of all the faithful." -Collect Prayer, Mass for the Dedication of a Church

"For you have made the whole world a temple of your glory, that your name might everywhere be extolled, yet you allow us to consecrate to you apt places for the divine mysteries. And so, we dedicate joyfully to your majesty this house of prayer, built by human labor. Here is foreshadowed the mystery of the true Temple, here is prefigured the heavenly Jerusalem." -Preface, Mass for the Dedication of a Church

## **Bulletin Articles**

### Face Time

Anyone who has spent significant time away from loved ones knows that connecting through a video call just isn't the same. We want to touch them, hear the nuances in their voice, linger in their physical presence. Similarly, and more importantly, viewing Mass on television or via social media just isn't the same as participating in person. While at times watching Mass is the only option available to us due to illness or other serious circumstances, it is good for us to remember that Jesus came to us in human form - in flesh and blood - so that we could more fully grasp the great love that God has for humanity. When we gather together at the celebration of the Eucharist, we hear God's word, feel the presence of Christ with one another, touch and taste the very Body and Blood of the Lord.

## Where 2 or 3 Are Gathered

Jesus said, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mt 18:20) This is especially true when we come together at Mass. In the celebration of the Eucharist, we experience Christ's presence together, are formed in word and sacrament, receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion, and are sent forth in Christ's mission of mercy, forgiveness, and compassion. In the Eucharist, we realize the true identity of the Church as the Body of Christ. In the Eucharist, we grow in communion with our Lord and one another, assured that Christ is with us.

## The Word Became Flesh

We often only think about the Incarnation - God coming to us in human form in Jesus - at Christmas time. Yet, the Incarnation is significant all the time. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." God understands our human experience and communicates to us through physical realities. In the sacraments, Christ's presence is made known to us through the stuff of the earth - water, bread, wine, oil - and these are experienced through our senses - touch, taste, smell. We must be physically present at Mass and in other sacramental celebrations in order to fully encounter Christ's presence.

## Become What You Are

In speaking about the Eucharist, St. Augustine said, "Believe what you see, see what you believe and become what you are: the Body of Christ." In sacramental Communion, we receive Christ's real presence, Christ's Body and Blood. While the graces received by participating at Mass are not solely received through sacramental Communion, the more perfect means of participating in the Eucharist include receiving Holy Communion when properly disposed. Our reception of sacramental Communion nourishes and strengthens us so that we may become more fully who we are as baptized Christians: members of Christ's Body.