



## **The Eucharist: Heart of Justice & Peace** **Catechesis for Adult Groups & Youth Ministry** **(Part three of a four part series)**

From the very beginning, the Church has drawn her life from the Eucharist. This Sacrament is the reason for her existence, the inexhaustible source of her holiness, the power of her unity, the bond of her communion, the source of dynamism in preaching the Gospel, the principle of her evangelizing activity, the font of charity, the heart of human promotion and the anticipation of her glory in the Eternal Banquet at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb.

*Instrumentum Laboris*, XI Ordinary General Assembly of Bishops, 2005

### The Liturgy of the Eucharist

At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's Body and Blood. Faithful to the Lord's command the church continues to do, in his memory and until his glorious return what he did on the eve of his Passion: "He took bread..." "He took the cup filled with wine..." The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ; they continue also to signify the goodness of creation.

The Lord, having loved those who were his own, loved them to the end. Knowing that the hour had come to leave this world and return to the Father, in the course of a meal he washed their feet and gave them the commandment of love. In order to leave them a pledge of this love, in order never to depart from his own and to make them sharers in his Passover, he instituted the Eucharist as a memorial of his death and Resurrection, and commanded his apostles to celebrate it until his return...

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1350, 1337

By contemplating the pierced side of Christ, we can understand the starting-point of [the] Encyclical Letter: "God is love" (1 John 4:8). It is there that this truth can be contemplated. It is from there that our definition of love must begin. In this contemplation the Christian discovers the path along which his life and love must move.

Jesus gave this act of oblation an enduring presence through his institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. He anticipated his death and resurrection by giving his disciples, in the bread and wine, his very self, his body and blood as the new manna (John 6:31-33). The ancient world had dimly perceived that man's real food – what truly nourishes – is ultimately the *Logos*, eternal wisdom: this same *Logos* now truly becomes food for us – as love. The Eucharist draw us into Jesus' act of self-oblation. More than just statically receiving the incarnate *Logos*, we enter into the very dynamic of his self-giving. The imagery of marriage between God and Israel is now realized in a way previously inconceivable: it had meant standing in God's presence, but now it becomes union with God through sharing in Jesus' self-gift, sharing in his body and blood. ...Union with Christ is also union with all those to whom he gives himself. Love of God and neighbor are now truly united: God incarnate draws us all to himself. "Worship" itself, Eucharistic communion, includes the reality both of being loved and of loving others in turn. Love can be "commanded" because it has first been given.

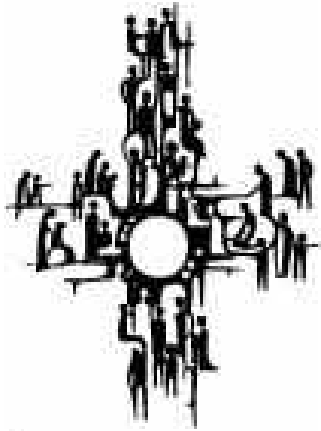
*Deus Caritas Est*, Benedict XVI, 2005

The two disciples of Emmaus, upon recognizing the Lord, "set out immediately" (Luke 24:33), in order to report what they had seen and heard. Once we have truly met the Risen One by partaking in his body and blood, we cannot keep to ourselves the joy we have experienced. The Eucharist not only provides the interior strength needed for this mission, but is also – in some sense – its plan. For the Eucharist is a mode of being, which passes from Jesus into each Christian, through whose testimony it is meant to spread throughout society and culture.

The Eucharist is not merely an expression of communion in the Church's life; it is also a *project of solidarity* for all of humanity. The Christian who takes part in the Eucharist learns to become a promoter of communion, peace and solidarity in every situation.

*Mane Hobiscum Domine*, John Paul II, 2004





...The Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. It embraces and permeates all creation. The Son of God became man in order to restore all creation, in one supreme act of praise, to the One who made it from nothing. He, the Eternal High Priest who by the blood of his Cross entered the eternal sanctuary, thus gives back to the Creator and Father all creation redeemed. He does so through the priestly ministry of the Church, to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity. Truly this is the *mysterium fidei* which is accomplished in the Eucharist: the world which came forth from the hands of God the Creator now returns to him redeemed by Christ. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, John Paul II, 2003

Christian discipleship means practicing what Jesus preached. Discipleship is found in a relationship with Christ and a commitment to His mission of “bringing good news to the poor, liberty to captives, new sight to the blind and setting the downtrodden free.” *Everyday Christianity*, USCCB, 2001

### Group Reflection

#### Opening Prayer

Briefly recollect Part I & Part II, re-memembering who we are and Whose we are as we have heard the Liturgy of the Word. We are collected as the baptized. We respond with praise and our individual and collective “yes”.

**Distribute page one of the teaching and 2 slips of paper.** Silently read the teaching on this page, allowing a short time for reflection. On slips of paper write two new things about the Eucharist that you have learned from the readings, adding them to the basket. Draw slips from the basket and share with the group. (have one person summarize to newsprint.)

#### Movement and exchange of the Eucharist

*Presentation of the gifts.* What do we bring forward? With our prayer and gift of imagination we call to mind all longings, hopes, joys, sorrows, and bring our whole self forward in the bread and wine. Using the Offertory prayer of St. Ignatius, reflect on the significance of the presentation of the gifts – share thoughts with one another.

*Blessed be God forever.* Thanks and praise for the gifts we bring. Discuss unity in Christ of the gifts of God for the people of God. Discuss the movement of the exchange and unity in Christ.

*Consecration.* Discuss the movement and Christ the center of all exchange. Who is present, what happens with time and space?

*The Our Father...* Reflect on this prayer in time and space and in unity as our proclamation of the mystery of faith and our Amen. What does *Our Father* mean to us (solidarity in time and space)? How does this prayer keep us present to the present? How does it promote hope, faith, trust, love, from day to day?

*Communion.* What are we receiving when we receive Christ in his Eucharist? Discuss this “encounter with Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever”. Read together the *Anima Christi*.

**Food for the Journey** (See page 3)

### Preparations

Copies of this teaching for participants

Slips of paper, a basket.

Newsprint

### Office of Peace & Justice / Catholic Social Ministries / Dioceses of Raleigh

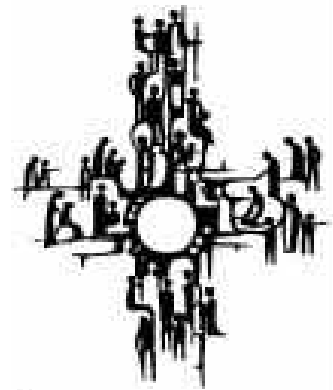
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Four Part Series on the Eucharist  
As We Gather  
Liturgy of the Word  
Liturgy of the Eucharist  
Sending Forth



### Opening Prayer

A: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.  
B: And kindle in them the fire of your love.  
A: Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.  
B: And you will renew the face of the earth.  
All: Lord, by the light of the light of the Holy Spirit  
you have taught the hearts of your faithful  
In the same Spirit  
help us to relish what is right  
and always rejoice in your consolation.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.



### An Offertory Prayer (St. Ignatius)

*Calling to mind the benefits received from creation, redemption, and particular gifts of grace; and pondering how much God has done and graces given; and considering how much our Lord wishes to give himself; then reflect within with great reason and justice how all possessions and self may be brought forward to the altar with deep affection...*

"Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given all to me, to You, O Lord, I return it. All is Yours; dispose of it according to Your will. Give me Your love and Your grace, for this is enough for me."

### The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name;  
Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

### Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.  
Body of Christ, save me.  
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.  
O good Jesu, hear me;  
within your wounds hide me;  
suffer me not to be separated from you;  
from the malignant enemy defend me;  
in the hour of my death call me,  
and bid me come to you,  
that with the saints I may praise you  
for ever and ever. Amen.

### Food for the Journey

Create your own offertory prayer or memorize the prayers of St. Ignatius above.  
How does the Eucharist promote the practice of solidarity, family, dignity of all people, the beatitudes, care for all creation, peace, forgiveness, justice in love?  
Reflect weekly on this Holy Exchange (you may want to keep a journal) and see how this manna of Christ renews, strengthens, and recreates your heart.