



## **The Eucharist: Heart of Justice & Peace**

### **Catechesis for Youth and Adults**

**(Part one 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

### *All Gather Together*

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 the memorial of his death and Resurrections, and commanded his apostles to celebrate it until his return...

From the beginning the Church has been faithful to the Lord's command. Of the Church of Jerusalem it is written: "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers..." (Acts 2:42)

It was above all on "the first day of the week," Sunday, the day of Jesus' resurrection, that the Christians met "to break bread." From that time on down to our own day the celebration of the Eucharist has been continued so that today we encounter it everywhere in the Church with the same fundamental structure. It remains the center of the Church's life.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1337, 1342, 1343*

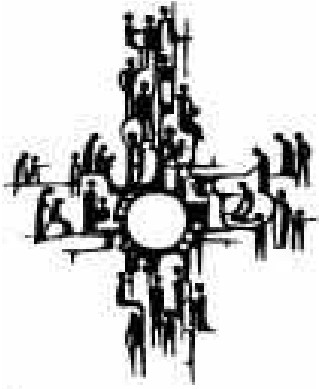
The Church was born of the paschal mystery. For this very reason the Eucharist, which is in an outstanding way the sacrament of the paschal mystery, stands at the center of the Church's life.

In the paschal event and the Eucharist which makes it present throughout the centuries, there is a truly enormous "capacity" which embraces all of history as the recipient of the grace of redemption. This amazement should always fill the Church assembled for the celebration of the Eucharist.

To contemplate the face of Christ, and to contemplate it with Mary, is the "programme" which I have set before the Church at the dawn of the third millennium... To contemplate Christ involves being able to recognize him where he manifests himself, in his many forms of presence, but above all in the living sacrament of his body and his blood. The Eucharist is both a mystery of faith and a "mystery of light". Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the faithful can in some way relive the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: "their eyes were opened and they recognized him".

*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, Pope John Paul II, 2003





The Eucharistic celebration is truly at the service of the life in Christ, in the Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus it is necessary to take care to pass from the Eucharist celebrated, to the Eucharist lived: from the mystery that is lived to the renewal of life.  
*The Year of the Eucharist, 2004*

It is in the liturgy that we find the fundamental direction, motivation, and strength for social ministry. Social ministry not genuinely rooted in prayer can easily burn itself out. On the other hand, worship that does not reflect the Lord's call to conversion, service, and justice can become pious ritual and empty of the gospel.  
*Communities of Salt and Light, USCCB, 1993*

### Group Reflection

Opening Prayer (page 3)

Read together or in small groups page 1. (10 minutes)

Reflection I (15 minutes)

Why do we gather for the Mass?

Have each reflect silently for ten minutes. Fill out ten different answers on slips of paper, dropping their answers in the basket when they are finished.

Stir the responses in the basket and read some of them. Ask for other responses that have not been read. Invite short discussion on what we have discovered.

Reflection II (15 minutes)

Who gathers with us?

Use the same process as Reflection I

Reflection III

In Whom have we gathered?

Using the Scripture on page three silently reflect on this question for ten minutes. Invite meditation as well as journalizing as each is so disposed.

Reflection IV (10 minutes)

Briefly review the movements of the Introductory Rites on page 3

Discuss:

How does the gathering call us to solidarity – locally and globally, and in time and space?

How does the gathering affirm human dignity - locally and globally, and in time and space?

Invite the group: using this teaching as a guide, to spend time reflecting on our gathering each Sunday, and our call to solidarity and the promotion of human dignity in our daily life and work. Meditate and/or journal our call and our response to the gathering.

### Preparation

Copies—pages 1-3

20 Small slips of paper for each, & a basket  
Extra notebook paper and pens for journaling, as needed.

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

919-821-9751 / [jurski@raldioc.org](mailto:jurski@raldioc.org) / [www.dioceseofraleigh.org](http://www.dioceseofraleigh.org)

Four Part Series on the Eucharist

As We Gather

Liturgy of the Word

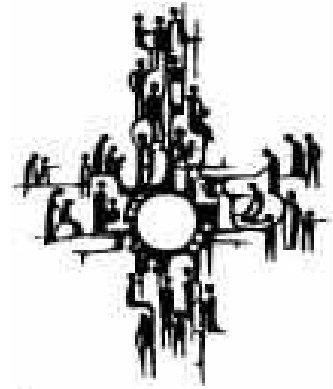
Liturgy of the Eucharist

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. Amen.



## Scripture Reflections

I am the bread of life. (John 6:35)

I am the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14:5)

Come to me all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.  
(Matt. 12:28)

I am the vine and you are the branches. (John 15:5)

Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.  
(Matt. 7:7)

The Father is in me and I am in the Father. (John 10:38)

Come and see. (John 1:39)

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'  
(Matt. 22:37-39)

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. (Matt. 18:20)

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matt. 28:20)

## Movements of the Introductory Rites

Opening Song

Sign of the Cross, and Priest's greeting that communicates the Lord's presence.

Penitential rite: Reconciliation

Kyrie Eleison

I confess to almighty God, and to you my brothers and sisters  
that I have sinned through my own fault  
in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do;  
and I ask blessed Mary, every virgin, all the angels and saints,  
and you my brothers and sisters to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Gloria – an ancient hymn in which the Church praises and entreats the Father and the Lamb

Opening Prayer or Collect