

Session 4

The Sacrament of the Eucharist



Let's Pray

Dear Jesus,

I believe that you are the true Bread from Heaven.

I believe that you are really present, Body, Blood,

Soul, and Divinity, in the Sacrament of the

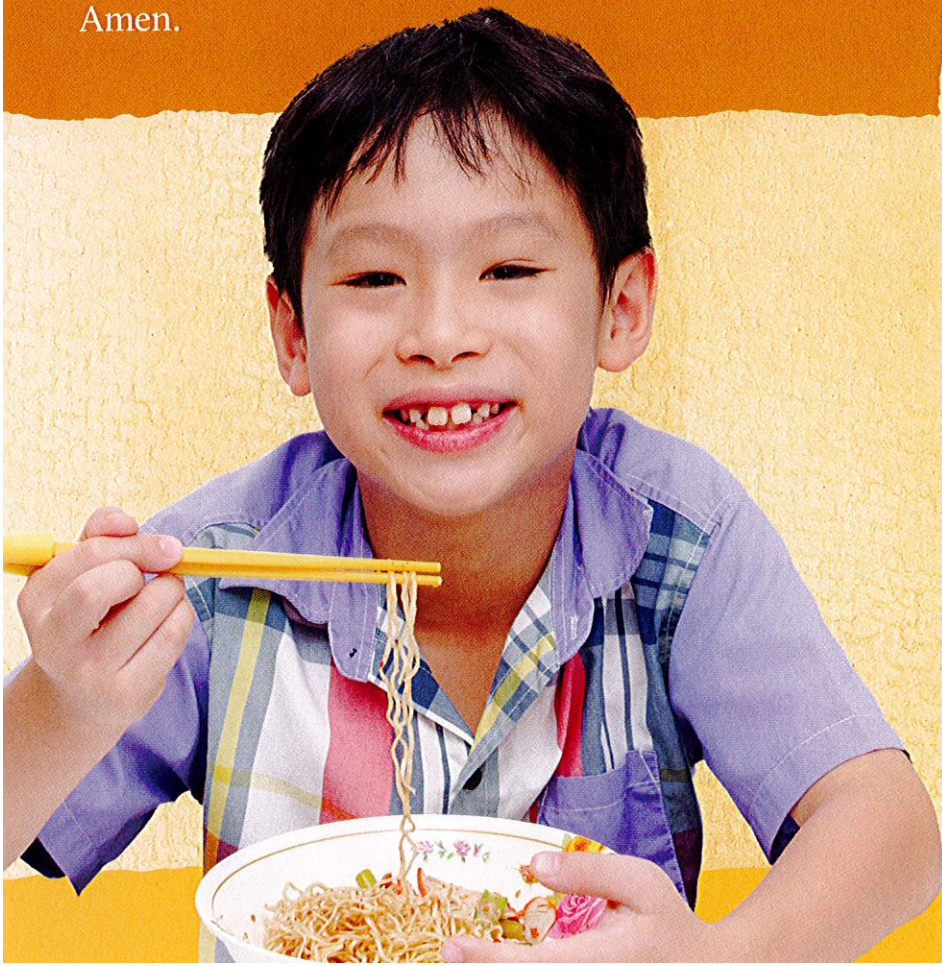
Eucharist. Please prepare my heart to be united

to you in Holy Communion.

Amen.

Introduction

The most important thing in life is to be close to Jesus. And he has given us a very special way to be close to him. Ordinary food gives our bodies energy and helps us grow. The Eucharist is spiritual food that strengthens our souls. When we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, he gives us his own life and unites us to himself.



Key Words

Miracle

A sign or wonder that can only be worked by God.

Heaven

The place where God dwells along with the angels and the saints.



Let's Read God's Word

Jesus Is the Bread of Life

From John 6:1–59

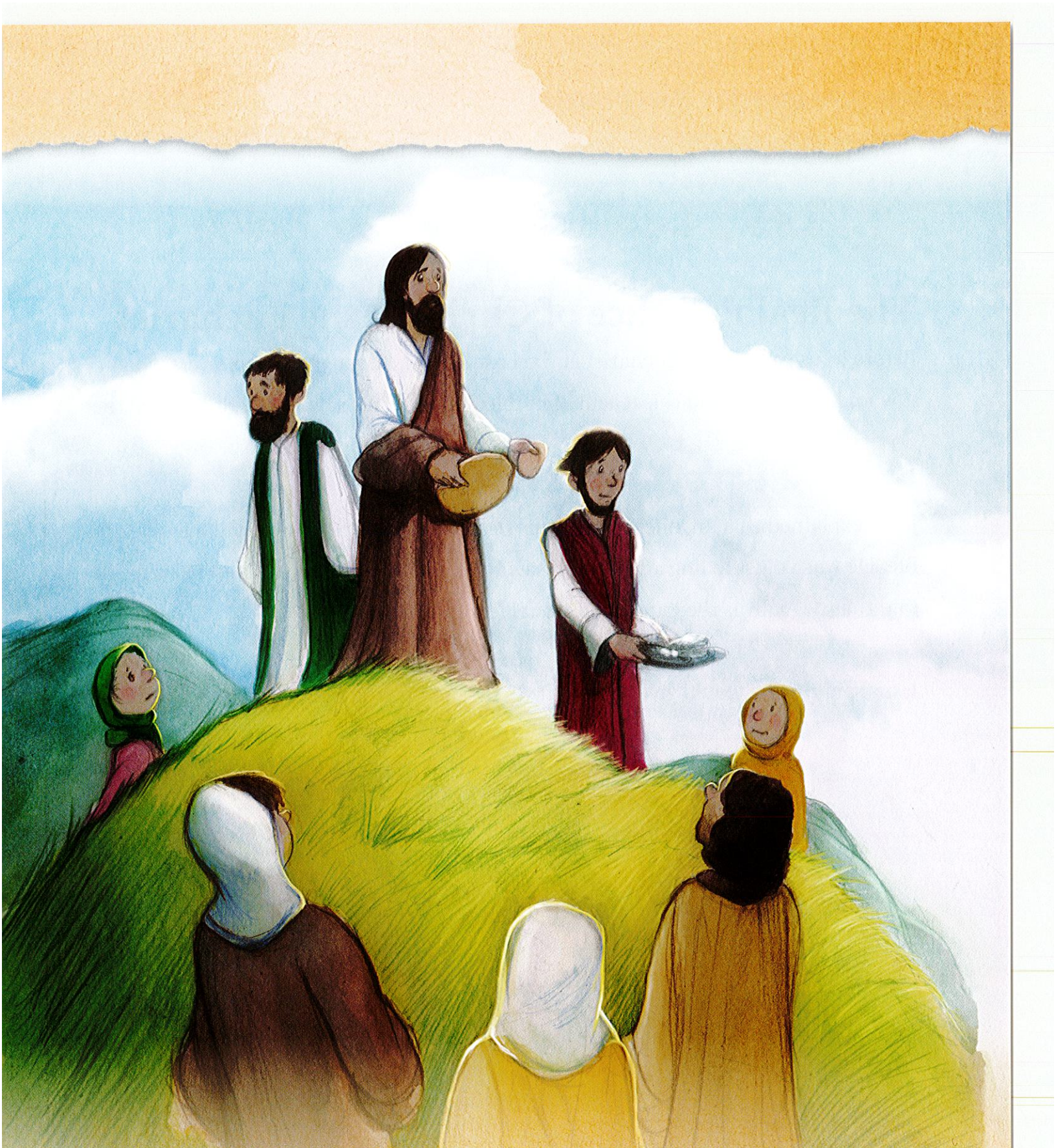
The Bible tells us how Jesus provided food for a huge crowd of people. He took five loaves of bread and two fish and said a prayer of thanksgiving over them. Then a great **miracle** occurred. When he gave the bread and fish to the crowd, there was enough to feed over 5,000 people.

The people were very impressed by the miracle. The next day, they followed Jesus to the town of Capernaum.

He told the people, “I am the bread of life. . . . If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

Some of the crowd argued among themselves. Jesus repeated, “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” Many of his followers found this difficult to understand and so they left him. However, Peter and the other Apostles trusted Jesus and so they stayed.

Jesus wants to give us eternal life with God in **Heaven**. In the Eucharist, he gives us his own Body as spiritual food and his own Blood as spiritual drink. Jesus is the only way to eternal life.



Let's Talk About It

How do these words of Jesus help you to understand the importance of Holy Communion?

Let's Learn About Our Faith

The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

Before Jesus gave us the Eucharist at the Last Supper, he taught his followers what it would mean. We find this teaching in the Gospel of John, chapter 6. It is called the **Bread of Life Discourse**.

Jesus explained that anyone who eats his flesh and drinks his Blood will have eternal life. He wasn't just telling a parable or saying that he was like bread from heaven—he said that he really is the true Bread from Heaven.

Jesus said that he would give us his true Body and his true Blood to eat and drink. We



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know that the bread and wine at Mass really become the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus because Jesus told us this is true. We call this the Real Presence.

This also means that, once consecrated, every piece of the **Host** and every drop of his Precious Blood is really the whole Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus. This is true during the Mass and also outside of the Mass.

After Holy Communion, anything remaining in the chalice and communion cups is consumed by the priest, deacon, or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

However, any consecrated Hosts—the bread that has been changed into the Body of Christ—that were not received by the people are kept in the **Tabernacle**. This is a special box-like container, often made of gold, where the Hosts are kept outside of Mass.

Because Jesus is present in the consecrated Hosts in the Tabernacle, as we enter or leave a Catholic church, we **genuflect** (bend the right knee to the ground) toward the Tabernacle as a sign of our love and respect to the Real Presence of Christ in the Tabernacle.

Key Words

Bread of Life Discourse

Jesus's teaching on the Eucharist in the Gospel of John, chapter 6.

Host

The small wafer or piece of unleavened bread that is consecrated in the Eucharist; it comes from the Latin word *hostia*, which means victim of a sacrifice.

Tabernacle

An ornate, box-like container where the Eucharist is reserved for prayer and adoration outside of Mass. Jesus is present in the Tabernacle, which is found in every Catholic church.

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Key Words

Genuflect

To bend the right knee to the floor or ground as a sign of love and respect.

Venial Sins

Lesser sins that do not result in a complete separation from God.

Act of Spiritual Communion

A prayer in which we tell Jesus how much we want to be united with him and ask him to come into our hearts in a special way, even when we cannot receive him in Holy Communion.

Eucharist

The sacrament instituted by Christ at the Last Supper, in which bread and wine are changed into his Body and Blood. From the Greek word meaning "thanksgiving."

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. It is the source because in the Eucharist Christ himself nourishes and strengthens us so that we can follow him more closely. It is the summit, the highest point, because in the Eucharist we are united to Christ, which is the ultimate goal of our lives. And, because it unites us with Christ, the Eucharist also draws us closer to the rest of the Body of Christ, the Church.

When we receive the Eucharist, we are forgiven of our **venial sins**, and we are made stronger against sinning in the future. Mortal sins, which separate us from Christ, must be forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation before we can receive Holy Communion.

Even if we cannot receive Jesus in the Eucharist, we can always make an **Act of Spiritual Communion**.

This is a prayer in which we tell Jesus how much we want to be united with him and ask him to come into our hearts in a special way. We will pray an Act of Spiritual Communion together at the end of this session.

Let's Talk About It

How does the Eucharist unite you to Jesus Christ?



Did You Know?

What Do We Call It?

The Sacrament of the Eucharist is so important that the Church has many different names for it. Each name teaches us something about the sacrament. Some of the names for the sacrament are:

The **Eucharist** because it is the best way for us to give thanks to God. Eucharist means “thanksgiving” in Greek, the language in which the New Testament was written.

The **Lord’s Supper** because Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper, and when we receive the Eucharist we share in that Last Supper.

The **Holy Sacrifice** because it makes Jesus’s sacrifice on the Cross present to us.

The **Most Blessed Sacrament** because it is the center of the sacramental life of the Church.

Holy Communion because it unites us with Jesus. The word *communion* means sharing something special, and in Holy Communion Jesus shares himself with us, and we share ourselves with Jesus.

Key Words

Lord’s Supper

The Passover meal that Jesus shared with his Apostles on the night before his Crucifixion. At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which bread and wine are changed into his Body and Blood.

Holy Sacrifice

In the Liturgy of the Mass, the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross is made present to us.

The Most Blessed Sacrament

Another name for the Eucharist because it is the center of the sacramental life of the Church.

Holy Communion

Another name for the Sacrament of the Eucharist because it unites us with Jesus.

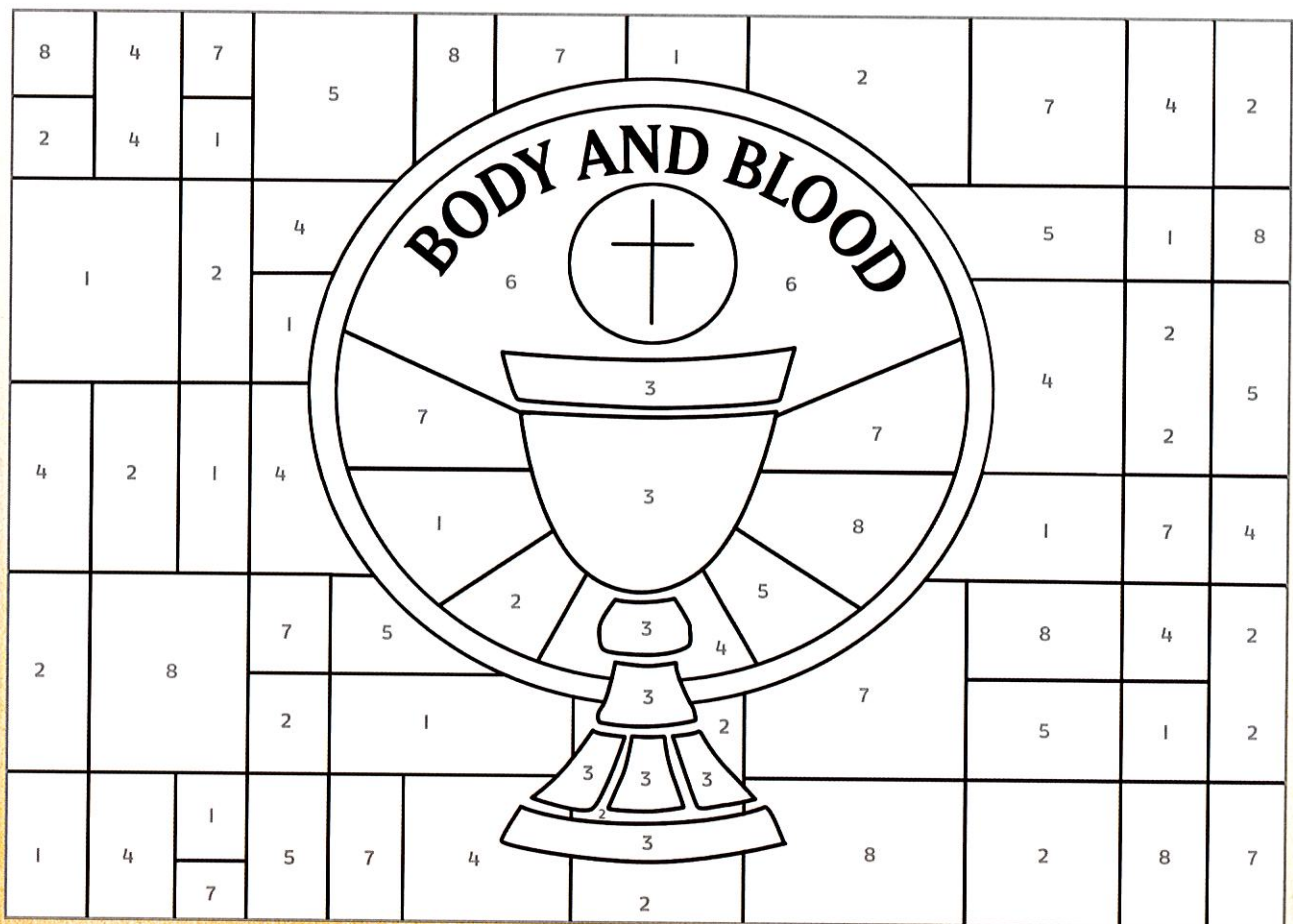
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Let's Do Activities

The Eucharist Mosaic

Jesus comes to us at every Mass in a great miracle! Fill in each shape with the color that matches the number in the table—and see what really happens in the miracle of the Eucharist!



- | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - RED | 2 - PURPLE | 3 - GOLD | 4 - BLUE |
| 5 - GREEN | 6 - YELLOW | 7 - ORANGE | 8 - LIGHT BLUE |

*"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?
 The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"*

—1 Corinthians 10:16

The Source and Summit

Climbing to the summit of a mountain is the ultimate goal of a journey. The Eucharist is the summit of our lives as Catholics. Being united to Jesus is the greatest goal of our Faith! When we come to Mass, we get to receive Jesus in this holy sacrament!

Find the Eucharist-related phrases in the Word Search.

Word Bank

Source
Summit
Lord's Supper
Eucharist
Holy Sacrifice
Communion
Holy Mass
Breaking Bread

I G
 Z I
 Q M O T
 D X S V
 L S H M E Z
 O R N D W Y
 L R Z L P W A B
 F D D B V H E V
 T P S S R Q Q U C I
 C P S K E L M C P P
 I O M U W A V R O U H U
 M S H P D K M C M W W Z
 I N G O P N I T U M Q I P J
 Z O H L E C N P K U D S R Q
 L U S L Y R P G D B N S H C W M
 Y V H C M P W B D C I U M A O D
 O X O R A A P P R C Y O T J O G E G
 G V Y F P S L B E J R N N X J N B M
 D S F C W O S N L A X P S J M U M I H B
 C H K G S Q V U O D G E U C H A R I S T
 K S O U R C E A Q M Q X F Y I E R W W E T D
 S U M M I T S K M H O L Y S A C R I F I C E

Let's Recall and Reflect

Why does Jesus say we need to eat his Flesh and drink his Blood? What are the spiritual benefits we receive when we receive the Eucharist?

Think about all the different names that you know for this sacrament. Which one is your favorite and why?

What is the host? The small wafer or piece of unleavened bread that is consecrated in the Eucharist; it comes from the Latin word *hostia*, which means the victim of a sacrifice.

What does the word Eucharist mean? Eucharist means “thanksgiving.”

Why do we call this sacrament Holy Communion? We call it Holy Communion because it unites us with Christ.

What is the Real Presence? The reality that Jesus is truly present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, in the Eucharist.

Why do we call the Eucharist a Holy Sacrifice? We call it a Holy Sacrifice because in the Mass the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross is made present to us.

Story of a Saint



Saint Tarcisus (third-century)

Saint Tarcisus was a twelve-year-old boy who lived at a time when people were arrested and sometimes killed just for being Christian. Because of this, people celebrated Mass secretly. Tarcisus was asked to take the Eucharist to Christians who were in prison. As he carried the Eucharist to the prison, a group of boys approached him. Realizing that he was holding the Eucharist, they started beating him, telling him they wanted to see it. Tarcisus was so faithful to Jesus that he held him close and died protecting the Eucharist from harm, knowing that he was holding the most precious Body of Jesus Christ.

Let's Pray

My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

—Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Memory Verse

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever.”

—John 6:51

Let's Read a Story

How Small Is God?

The sun turned the September Saturday into a day from summer. Families gathered at Jackson's Lake to enjoy the weather. The Perry family packed a small picnic basket and sat in their usual spot near a large oak tree. Father Cliff was there with the older kids from church playing football.

People stood on the shoreline of the lake to fish. Nick watched Mr. Norm, the church handyman, kneel next to his tackle box and put bait onto a hook.

"Hi, Mr. Norm," Nick said when he walked up.

"Hello, Nick." Mr. Norm stood up. He had a toothpick in the corner of his mouth like always. He cast his line into the water. The reel buzzed.

Nick wanted to ask him about the buried treasure he had found yesterday. But before he could say anything, Mr. Norm suddenly said, "I've been thinking. How small is God?"

Nick looked at him, surprised. "What do you mean?"

"When I was younger, I imagined that he was really, really big. Bigger than the universe, bigger than anything I could think of. Because he is God and he made everything there is."

"I think of him the same way," Nick said.

"But then I thought that it's like asking 'How big is air?' God can be any size. So how small can he be?"

Nick shrugged.

"Let's think about that. God, who is 'bigger' than anything we know, became the size of a man and came to Earth as Jesus. But he didn't come as a full-grown man; he came as a baby. And the baby was made up of atoms and cells and flesh and blood before he was born. If we put the cells of Jesus under a microscope, would we see God?"

"No," Nick said. But he wasn't sure.

“And yet Jesus was fully God and fully man. He appeared as one thing to us, but was something else at the same time.” Mr. Norm moved his toothpick from one side of his mouth to the other. “It’s kind of like the story when God appeared as a burning bush to Moses. Sometimes God appears to us in disguise.”



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“Why are you thinking about this?” Nick asked.

“Because tomorrow is Mass, and God will be there in disguise.” Mr. Norm drew the line back in and then recast it into the water. He didn’t say any more.

Nick wondered how God would be disguised at Mass.



Let's Talk About It

Why do you think God sometimes appears in disguise?

How can God be both big and small?

The Eucharist appears like bread and wine. What is it really?