

Jesus and the Eucharist Study

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT SESSION 4: WHY A CHURCH?



We uniquely encounter the love of God in the Church Jesus established for us. Jesus didn't simply leave us a message or instructions to follow. Jesus offers us the Church, his Mystical Body, so that through her we may share with him in his divine life. She makes Jesus present to us through a profound, unbreakable, mysterious continuity with him. She offers trustworthy and authoritative teaching, handing on all that God has revealed, and helps us apply it to our lives today. She contains and communicates his grace, manifesting God's love for us and helping us on our earthly pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem. What a gift!

LECTIO PRAYER

1. John 15:5, 7-9, 12-14 | The Vine and the Branches

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

"As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you."

STUDY OVERVIEW

- 1: What's Our Story?
- 2: Who Is Jesus?
- 3: Am I Saved?
- 4: Why a Church?
- 5: God Is with Us
- 6: The Story of the Eucharist
- 7: Bread for the Journey

2. Litany of Saints, abridged. Please respond below as noted in bold print.

- ◆ Lord, have mercy, **Lord, have mercy.**
- ◆ Christ, have mercy, **Christ, have mercy.**
- ◆ Lord, have mercy, **Lord, have mercy.**
- ◆ Holy Mary, Mother of God, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Michael, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Holy Angels of God, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint John the Baptist, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Joseph, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Peter and Saint Paul, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Andrew, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint John, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Mary Magdalene, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Stephen, **Pray for us.**

- ◆ Saint Ignatius, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Lawrence, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicity, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Agnes, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Gregory, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Augustine, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Athanasius, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Basil, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Martin, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Benedict, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Francis and Saint Dominic, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Francis Xavier, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint John Vianney, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Catherine of Siena, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Teresa of Jesus, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Saint Manuel González García, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Blessed Carlo Acutis, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ All holy men and women, **Pray for us.**
- ◆ Lord, be merciful, **Lord, deliver us, we pray.**
- ◆ From all evil, **Lord, deliver us, we pray.**
- ◆ From every sin, **Lord, deliver us, we pray.**
- ◆ From everlasting death, **Lord, deliver us, we pray.**
- ◆ By your Incarnation, **Lord, deliver us, we pray.**
- ◆ By your Death and Resurrection, **Lord, deliver us, we pray.**
- ◆ By your outpouring of the Holy Spirit, **Lord, deliver us, we pray.**
- ◆ Be merciful to us sinners. **Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.**
- ◆ Jesus, Son of the Living God. **Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.**
- ◆ Christ, hear us, **Christ, hear us.**
- ◆ Christ, graciously hear us. **Christ, graciously hear us.**

PART 1: LESSON * (Selected quotes from the lesson are provided below for your reference.



As you listen, feel free to write notes in the space provided.)

1. I had the great opportunity to take some pretty spectacular journeys in my life... A harder journey to take is a journey of faith. It doesn't sound exciting like a space flight; but it is ultimately the most important journey we can take as human beings.
General Kevin Chilton
2. The Church is essentially a way for us to encounter the presence of God that we need to live life to the full. It's the place where we can look for authoritative teaching, interpreting all that he left us and helping us to apply it to our lives today. **Chris Stefanick**
3. You can't fulfill your intended purpose from God, you can't grow into your full stature as who he created you to be, you cannot be saved, just on your own.
Chris Stefanick
4. What the research shows is that people who went through their life connected to a community... ended up physically and emotionally in much better shape than their peers. As a Catholic, this research is no surprise to me, that we were made by relationship for relationship. Our God is relationship. **Jim Owens**
5. Human beings need fellowship with other human beings. That's why he didn't just save us on our own. He saved us as a people... The Church is part of God's plan. Part of the plan of a Father who loves his children and wants to save us all together. **Chris Stefanick**

* Lesson content provided by the Augustine Institute's study, The Search, Session 7

PART 1: TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Table Facilitator, please read the following out loud: We will begin our table discussion with the "Process for Sharing." I will read the discussion questions out loud and pause for a moment to allow you time for reflection, and then I will share first.

For the first discussion, each person is invited to share on one or both of the following questions:

1. What stood out to you in the time of prayer or in the lesson?
2. Please share a time when the Church's teaching has provided you direction and freedom.
3. How do your Christian friends challenge you and build you up in your faith?
4. Please share an experience where you faced a difficult situation and members of your Church community supported you.



1. General Discussion Guidelines (read by the table facilitator)

- ◆ My job as a facilitator is simply to make sure that everyone at the table has an opportunity to contribute, the time is shared amongst all table members, and the discussion stays on track. As a member of the small group, I will be involved in the table discussion.
- ◆ Note that table facilitators are not necessarily theologians or experts.

2. Respectful Discussion Guidelines (read by a member of the group who volunteers)

- ◆ Everyone's input is valued. We are here to listen to each other and to the promptings of the Holy Spirit with a disposition of the heart that we all have something to learn. As it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, "Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do."
- ◆ The purpose of the table discussions is to build relationships and exchange perspectives among table members. We are not here to debate or to try to reach a table consensus. Expect differing viewpoints and presume the good will of the other.
- ◆ People may share personal experiences. Please be sensitive to this vulnerability and do not share others' private information outside this group.

3. Process for Sharing (read by another member of the group who volunteers)

- ◆ To open our table discussion, we will use the "Process for Sharing," which offers everyone an opportunity to comment.
 - **The table facilitator will read the discussion questions out loud and pause for a moment to allow time for reflection, and then the facilitator will share first.**
 - **After the facilitator is done, he or she invites another to share. You can invite anyone at the table, whether they are next to you or across from you. After that person has shared, they invite another. You will do this until everyone at your table has been asked to share.**
 - **All are encouraged to share but no one should feel pressured to speak. If you don't want to share, simply say "pass," and ask another to share.**
 - **We ask you to listen and not immediately respond to someone's sharing during this process. Listening is one of the greatest gifts we can give to each other.**
 - **Please limit your sharing to a couple of minutes to allow time for all to share.**
- ◆ Once this process is complete, the table facilitator will initiate an open table discussion. Now, please turn to Page 3, and your Table Facilitator will open the table discussion.

PART 2: LESSON * (Selected quotes from the lesson are provided below for your reference.



As you listen, feel free to write notes in the space provided.)

1. The fact that God saves us as a family means... that we have an organized religion. Religion was never meant to be a private, personal thing. **Chris Stefanick**
2. That also means the Church is messy... From the very beginning [God] has chosen messy people to work with (e.g., Moses, David, Peter, you and me). **Chris Stefanick**
3. We see a lot in the scandal that has happened in the Church. There are many people who have been deeply, deeply hurt... This is a crisis and stuff that should have never happened... When sin happens... our God is an incredible source of love and healing. **Jim Beckman**
4. In the Catholic Church there have been really bad people. There have also been saints... The good people are heroes in the faith, people to look up to and aspire to. **Noelle Garcia**
5. The Catholic Church is the oldest institution in the western world... people fueled by their faith to do so much good in the world. **Chris Stefanick**
6. We have bodies; we exist in these bodies, and so the spiritual life of the person also has to include the body. The liturgical experience is part of that. Jonathan Pageau
7. [In the sacraments,] we literally get God's life to begin the process of change and transformation to become, not just who we are, but who we were created to be—who we are destined to be. **Jim Beckman**
8. Taking the Eucharist to orbit for me was a big deal. And receiving the Eucharist on Sunday for me is a big deal because I believe it is what Jesus says it is. **General Kevin Chilton**
9. A lot of people say, "I don't want to follow some man-made religion." You know what, I don't either. Our religion was founded by Jesus Christ. **Chris Stefanick**

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PART 2: TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Table Facilitator, please read the following out loud: We will once again begin our table discussion with the "Process for Sharing." I will read the discussion questions out loud and pause for a moment to allow time for reflection, and then I will share first.

For the discussion, each person is invited to share on one or two of the following questions:

1. What stood out to you or was an "aha" moment in the lesson?
2. What saints inspire you the most and why?
3. What are some ways the Church and the Sacraments enrich your faith?