

Jesus and the Eucharist Study

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT SESSION 5: GOD IS WITH US



From the very beginning, God desired to be with his people. From the Garden of Eden to the Exodus, from the tabernacle in the wilderness to the temple in Jerusalem, the God of the universe has chosen to accompany his people and dwell with them. The Sacrament of the Eucharist, as the gift par excellence, is the gift of Christ himself. Under the humble species of bread and wine, there is the sacramental reality of Christ's Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. God gives himself to us in the Eucharist to give us strength for our journey and to accompany us along our way.

LECTIO PRAYER

1. **John 6:32-35, 47, 51 | The Bread of Life Discourse**

"Jesus said to them, 'Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' So they said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.' Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst'... Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life... I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

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 the Blessed Sacrament**, abridged. Please respond, "**have mercy on us.**"

- ◆ God the Father of Heaven, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ God the Son, Redeemer of the world, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ God the Holy Spirit, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Living Bread, that came down from Heaven, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Perpetual Sacrifice, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Lamb without spot, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Food of angels, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Hidden manna, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Word made Flesh, dwelling in us, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Most holy of all sacrifices, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Heavenly antidote against the poison of sin, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Most wonderful of all miracles, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Most holy Commemoration of the Passion of Christ, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Medicine of immortality, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Sweetest Banquet, at which angels minister, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Priest and Victim, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Viaticum of such as die in the Lord, **have mercy on us.**
- ◆ Pledge of future glory, **have mercy on 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.)

I. Martyrs and heroes of the Eucharist

- A. St. Philip Neri parish, New York, 1912
- B. St. Tarcisus, Roman Empire, 275
- C. St. Edmund Campion, England, 1581
- D. Young girl, China, 1900
- E. St. Clare of Assisi, Italy, 1224

II. What do Catholics believe?

- A. The Eucharist is one of the seven sacraments of the Church
 - 1. A sacrament is an efficacious sign of grace established by Christ to convey his divine life.
 - 2. The Eucharist is the sacrament of sacraments: that one toward which all others are oriented.
 - 3. Bread and wine become the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ fully present.

- B. Transubstantiation
 - 1. “trans” – to change
 - 2. “substance” – the essence of something; what it really is
 - 3. The outward appearance remains that of bread and wine, but the substance is changed into Jesus’s Body and Blood.

- C. This sacrament has been given many names: the Lord’s Supper, the Breaking of the Bread, the Holy Sacrifice, Holy Communion, and it is most commonly called the Mass or Eucharist (from the Greek word meaning thanksgiving).

- D. The Eucharist is truly God present with us
 - 1. God’s power and love is in all things great and small.
 - 2. Through his love for us, God chooses—throughout history—to come to us in ways we can understand: in a cloud; in a still, small voice; as a child placed in a manger; in a tiny village; under the unassuming, tangible signs of bread and wine.

- E. All the sacraments are profound mysteries. And yet their outward signs, their appearances, are humble. In the Eucharist, the outward signs of bread and wine point to a supernatural reality, a spiritual nourishment we can’t do without.

* Lesson content provided by the Augustine Institute’s study, The Presence, Session 1

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 you had a memorable encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist.



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 2, 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.)

III. God is with his people

A. Meals are about sharing relationships with other people. An intimate communion, a bond, a profound relationship was established at the table. At every Eucharist, God wants to have an intimate, profound union with us.

B. God is love (see 1 John 4:8). He created us out of love in order to invite us into the communion of the Trinity. God desires to be with us.

C. God’s presence in the Old Testament foreshadows the Eucharist

1. God’s revelation of his name at the burning bush—“I Am”—communicates not just God’s existence, but his presence with his people. That’s the good news—God is with his people.
2. The refrain of God’s covenant with his people is “I will be your God, and you will be my people” (for example, see Exodus 6:7).

D. The Incarnation is the culmination of God’s plan to be with his people

1. “...and they shall name him Emmanuel,’ which means, ‘God is with us.’” (Matthew 1:23)

E. Jesus established the Eucharist to remain present with us

1. At the Last Supper, Jesus changed bread and wine into his Body and Blood, and then he told the Apostles to continue to do what he had just done.
2. The question is not what is the Eucharist; it is, who is the Eucharist? The Eucharist is not a thing, it is a person—Jesus Christ.
3. God gives himself to us in the Eucharist not only to give us strength for our journey, but also to accompany us at every moment on the journey.

* Lesson content provided by the Augustine Institute’s study, The Presence, Session 1

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 difference does attending Mass make in your life?
3. Outside of Mass, what are some ways you can prioritize your relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist?
4. What inspires you to believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist? What does that mean for your life?