

The Real Presence

Q. 258. Why does Jesus become present in the Holy Eucharist?

Jesus becomes present in the Holy Eucharist to renew the sacrifice of Calvary in an unbloody manner on our altars, to nourish our souls in Holy Communion, and to remain bodily among us by His Real Presence in our tabernacles.

Faith teaches us that Jesus Christ is truly, really, and substantially present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, under the veil of the sacramental species of bread and wine, so long as these species continue to exist. Under the appearances of bread, our Lord's Blood and Soul, as well as His Body, are present. Furthermore, under the appearances of wine, His Body and Soul, as well as His Blood, are present, because in the Holy Eucharist the Body and Blood of the glorified Christ Who is in heaven are present. In heaven, the Body, Blood, and Soul of Christ are inseparably united. The divinity of Christ is present under both the appearance of bread and the appearance of wine, because, from the time of the Incarnation, the divinity has been constantly and inseparably united to the entire human nature of Christ.

Jesus remains in the tabernacles in Catholic churches day and night, full of life and in continual action. First, He is always in loving adoration before His heavenly Father. Sublime is the honor which Jesus renders to Him in each tabernacle at all times. His adoration is of infinite value because it is offered by the very Son of God.

Secondly, Jesus occupies Himself at the same time with our dearest interests. He thanks God for us, prays continually for us, and asks pardon for our sins and makes reparation and amends for them. He continually offers Himself in sacrifice to God, and continually pours out His graces upon all of mankind as our Eucharistic Mediator.

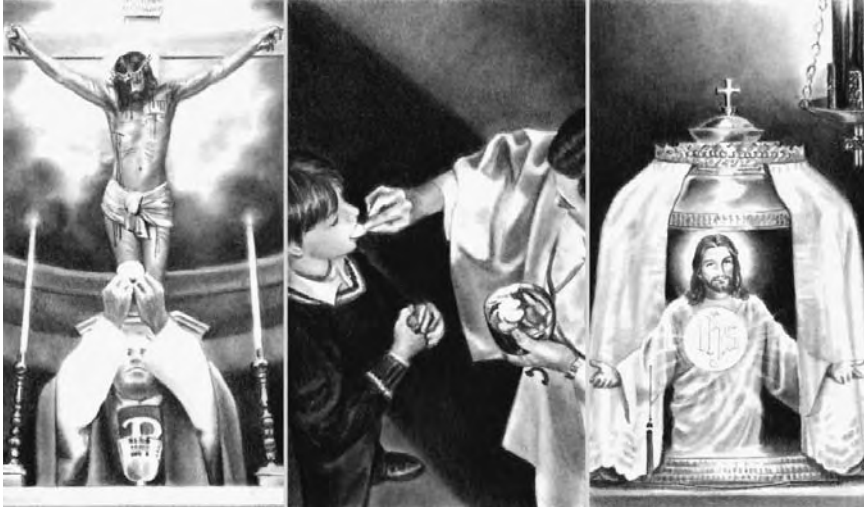
The Holy Eucharist continues the life of Jesus among us. Every day He is "born again," so to speak, in a state that is similar to that of the Incarnation. At the words of consecration spoken by the priest, and under the appearance of bread and wine, He comes upon the altar as God and man.

He renews His public life by His presence everywhere in the world as Teacher, Healer, and Friend. How many miracles are worked in the souls of men through Holy Mass and Communion! How many souls are taught, blessed, comforted, and healed! Now He is everywhere, ready to assist us all as the Son of God, with all of His divine power and infinite love; to radiate His sacred influence upon our souls; and to be the source of all strength, life, and joy.

For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.

The mysteries of His Passion are contained in the Eucharist, for It is a remembrance of His death. Holy Mass is a re-presentation of the Sacrifice of the Last Supper and of the Sacrifice of the Cross.

The glory of His risen life is renewed in the Eucharist. He is present there in His glorious, transfigured body, just as He appeared after His Resurrection. He makes Himself the friendly Companion of our pilgrimage, comforting, encouraging, and blessing our work. All of the mysteries of the life of Jesus are renewed in the Holy Eucharist for the benefit of our souls.



Sacred Scripture

(Teach) them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. *Matthew 28:20*

“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal.” *John 6:27*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1358 We must therefore consider the Eucharist as: — thanksgiving and praise to the *Father*; — the sacrificial memorial of *Christ* and his Body; — the presence of Christ by the power of his word and of his *Spirit*.

Splendor of Truth

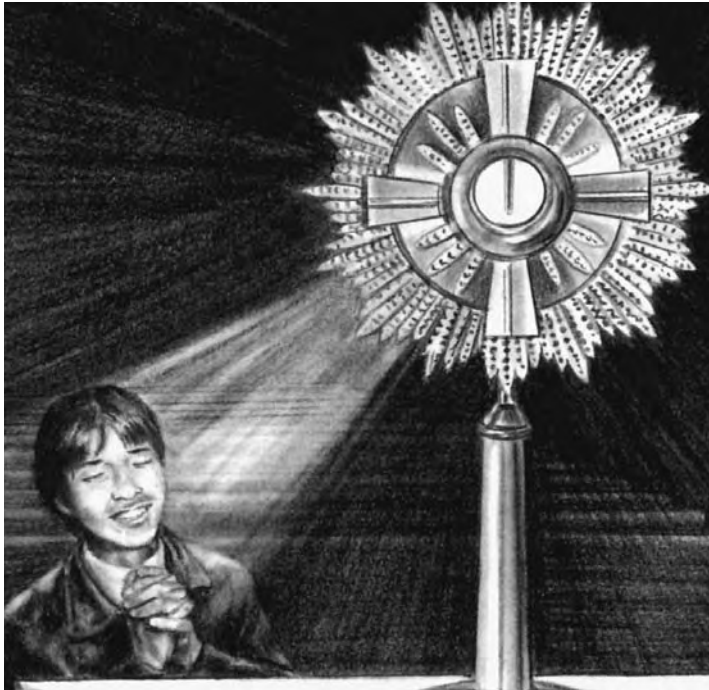
People today need to turn to Christ once again in order to receive from him the answer to their questions about what is good and what is evil. Christ is the Teacher, the Risen One who has life in himself and who is always present in his Church and in the world.... At the source and summit of the economy of salvation, as the Alpha and the Omega of human history (cf. Rev 1:8; 21:6; 22:13), Christ sheds light on man’s condition and his integral vocation. (*section 8*)

Roman Curia Document

There should be no doubt in anyone’s mind “that all the faithful ought to show to this most holy sacrament the worship which is due to the true God, as has always been the custom of the Catholic Church. Nor is it to be adored any the less because it was instituted by Christ to be eaten.” For even in the reserved sacrament he is to be adored, because he is substantially present there through that conversion of bread and wine which, as the Council of Trent tells us, is most aptly named transubstantiation.

The mystery of the Eucharist should therefore be considered in all its fullness, not only in the celebration of Mass but also in devotion to the sacred species which remain after Mass and are reserved to extend the grace of the sacrifice. *Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery* (1967), 3

#E4-15



Summary Prayer

Jesus, You greatly desired to eat the Passover with Your Apostles before You suffered, because You were about to give us the greatest gift of love which Your Sacred Heart could offer.

We believe that it is especially in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass that we can look upon You Who have been pierced by our sins, for Your sacrifice at Calvary is renewed in an unbloody manner at Holy Mass. You offer Yourself to Your heavenly Father in the same spirit of love and resignation to His holy will as You did on Calvary, because You are present in the Sacred Host as the Victim of Calvary. As the Sacred Host is raised after the consecration, we cry out with the faith of the centurion who stood watch at Your crucifixion, "You are truly the Son of God!" With St. Thomas we exclaim, "My Lord and my God!"

We unite ourselves with You as You offer Yourself again to Your Father, and we wish to become one sacrifice with You. Everything that You send us or permit in our lives, whether favorable or unfavorable, sweet or bitter, is acceptable to us, for we have resolved to conform ourselves to the divine will in all things.

Jesus, we believe that Holy Communion opens the treasury of all of the graces which You merited for us by Your bloody death on the Cross. May its richest grace be for us a most intimate union with You. At Holy Communion we drink at the very fountain of grace, holiness, and happi-

ness because in it You give us Your Sacred Heart, the source of all grace, holiness, and peace.

You remain with us after Mass and Communion in the tabernacles of our churches. It is by adoration and visits to You in the Blessed Sacrament that we can open our souls to Your transforming action. We want to share with You our joys and sorrows, our feelings and affections, and our plans and desires. May our whole life be a sharing with You, especially by our prayer before the tabernacle. May You be praised forever and ever. Amen.

Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. Jesus becomes present in the Holy Eucharist for three major reasons. Cite one reason and explain it in simple terms.
2. How do you show your faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament? How can you help others to love Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament?
3. Visit the Blessed Sacrament—if possible with your family—and stay with Jesus for awhile. Meditate on Matthew 28:20 and John 6:35-40. Recall the times when you experienced the presence of Jesus in your family and thank Him for always being there with you.

Catechism by Diagram

#E4-54



The Whole Christ Everywhere. Jesus Christ is present in the Holy Eucharist, whole and entire, under the appearances of bread and wine. He is simultaneously present in every single Sacred Host and under the appearance of wine in every single consecrated chalice wherever Mass is offered. The Ostensorium (or Monstrance) is a symbol of the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacred Host after Mass in the tabernacles of Catholic churches throughout the world (hosts in every continent).

Q. 259. Why is the Holy Eucharist reserved in our churches?

The Holy Eucharist is reserved in our churches in order to greatly enhance our adoration of Jesus and to increase our love for others. It is also reserved in the churches in order to be taken to the sick.

The Jewish Passover of the Old Covenant was a symbol of the Holy Eucharist of the New Covenant. Jesus surpassed and fulfilled the Jewish Passover meal when He instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper. The Jews, as the first People of God, ate manna in the desert; so the new People of God, Christians, eat the Eucharist. The Ark of the Covenant and the pillar of fire were signs of God's special presence with His people during their long journey through the desert. Today, Jesus is present with us in the tabernacle to be our comfort in our journey through life; He is our Emmanuel ("God with us").

Jesus keeps the promise He made before ascending into heaven: "And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

Jesus is present at Mass in His words which are read to the people. He is present in the priest and in the people through whom He acts, when they re-enact what He did at the Last Supper. He is most present under the appearance of bread and wine which become His Body and Blood after the consecration in the Mass. The Church extends this Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist by reserving the consecrated species of bread.

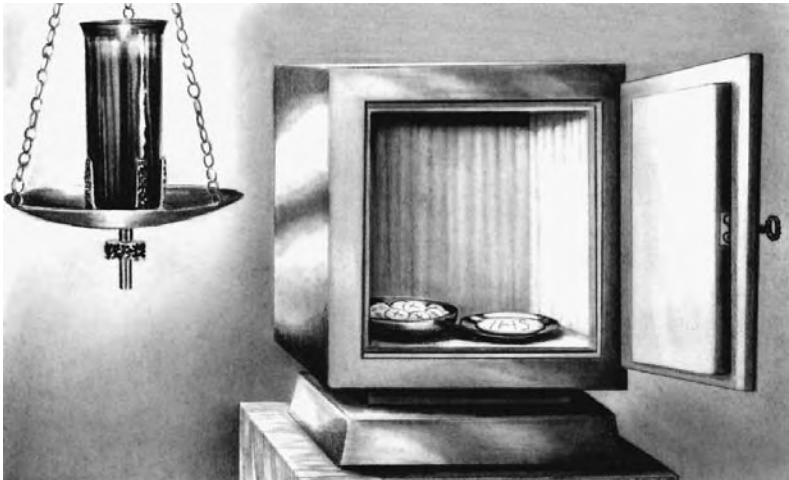
Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament means that, at the end of Communion, the remaining consecrated Hosts are placed in the tabernacle where they are reverently preserved. Thus, the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist is always available, both as a continuing sign of Jesus' Real Presence among His people and as spiritual food for the sick and dying.



For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1380 It is highly fitting that Christ should have wanted to remain present to his Church in this unique way. Since Christ was about to take his departure from his own in his visible form, he wanted to give us his sacramental presence; since he was about to offer himself on the cross to save us, he wanted us to have the memorial of the love with which he loved us “to the end,”²¹ even to the giving of his life. In his Eucharistic presence he remains mysteriously in our midst as the one who loved us and gave himself up for us,²² and he remains under signs that express and communicate this love: “The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in this sacrament of love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith, and open to making amends for the serious offenses and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease.”²³



#T6-2

Summary Prayer

Jesus, You are close to us in the tabernacle; You are our best Friend and our Companion in exile, with a heart that is human like our own, a heart that can understand our sorrows and problems since it has experienced all that we must bear.

Your heart sympathizes with us and befriends us in our hour of need; You love us with the love that the best of friends share. Like a real furnace of fire, Your Heart burns for us with a love that knows no end, because It has Its source in the depths of the Godhead. It is for us, as if there were no other to share Its infinite warmth. The tender affection You pour out upon countless other souls never lessens Your love for us. Even when we forget You, You think of us; even when we offend or disappoint You, You sacrifice Yourself for us at Mass; when we have trials, You are ready to console and strengthen us.

Jesus, we thank You for being our best Friend and for being present in the holy Sacrament of the Altar. Help us to declare our faith in Your Real Presence in the Eucharist and to express our love for You with sincere devotion. We wish to answer Your invitation: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Lord, may we come to You, now and forever. Amen.

Catechism by Diagram

#E4-60



The Sacrament Reserved. When the Eucharist is offered to God in sacrifice on the altar, it is called the Sacrifice of the Mass. When it is given to a person as food for his soul (heart with host), it is called Holy Communion. Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in our churches means that, at the end of Communion, the remaining consecrated bread is placed in the tabernacle and is reverently preserved for our adoration and to provide spiritual food for the sick and the dying.

Q. 260. What do we owe to Jesus, reserved in the Blessed Sacrament?

We owe gratitude, adoration, and devotion to the Real Presence of Jesus, reserved in the Blessed Sacrament.

Our devotion is expressed in visits to the tabernacle in our churches, at Benediction, and in Eucharistic processions. Benediction is a brief ceremony in

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which the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for the people to adore and reverence. After the period of adoration, the priest blesses the people with the consecrated Host. We should thank Jesus for all of His blessings and adore Him as our God and Savior. We should offer ourselves to His service with all the love in our hearts.

The Eucharist was the center of the early Christian community. It is still the center of all worship of God in the Church today and will be so until the end of time.



#E4_6-7

Sacred Scripture

And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshiped him. *Matthew 2:11*

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. *1 Chronicles 29:11*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

2628 *Adoration* is the first attitude of man acknowledging that he is a creature before his Creator. It exalts the greatness of the Lord who made us¹ and the almighty power of the Savior who sets us free from evil. Adoration is homage of the spirit to the “King of Glory;”² respectful silence in the presence of the “ever greater” God.³ Adoration of the thrice-holy and sovereign God of love blends with humility and gives assurance to our supplications.

Vatican Council II

The house of prayer in which the most holy Eucharist is celebrated and reserved, where the faithful assemble, and where is worshiped the presence of the Son of God our Savior, offered for us on the sacrificial altar for the help and consolation of the faithful—this house ought to be in good taste and a worthy place for prayer and sacred ceremonial (cf. St. Jerome, *Epist.*, 114, 2). *Priests*, 5

Catechism by Diagram

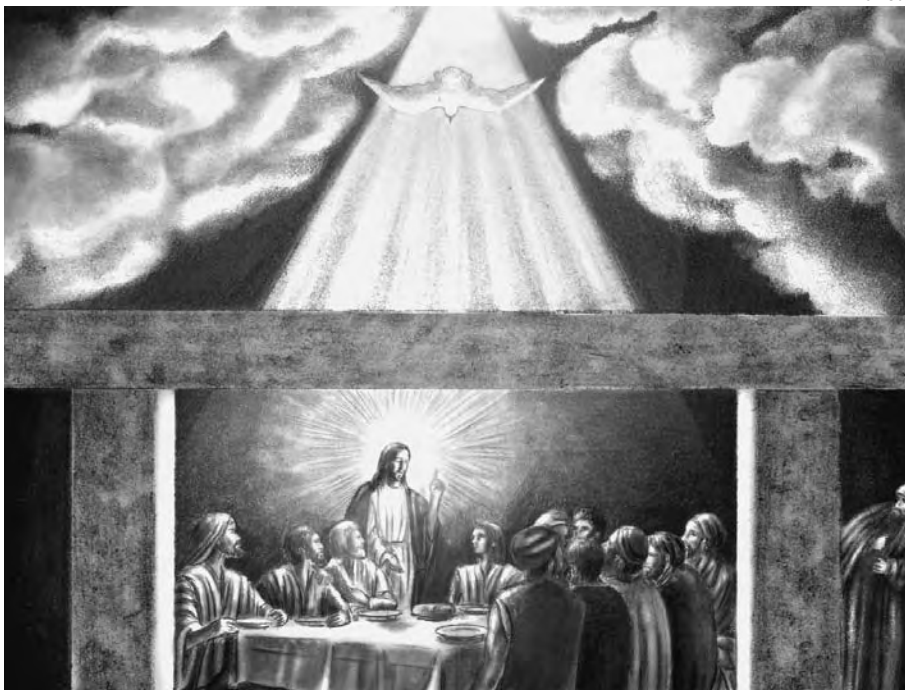
#J2-434



The Path of Christ's Love. For love of us, the Son of God, Jesus, was born of the Virgin Mary at Bethlehem (arrow from triangle to monogram in crib). At the Last Supper, Jesus' words and power made Him really present in the bread and wine. He was present as the Victim Who would be offered in sacrifice on the Cross. He gave Himself as food to His Apostles at the Last Supper. After His death on the Cross, Jesus (monogram over tomb) arose from the dead, remained on the earth for forty days, and then ascended into heaven (arrow). Jesus still remains with us, however, in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar (Host and Chalice).

Summary Prayer

Jesus, our God, we firmly believe that You are really and bodily present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. From the very depths of our hearts, we adore You and worship Your Sacred Presence with all possible humility. What a joy it is to have You always with us in the tabernacle and to be able to speak to You, heart to heart, with all confidence! May You be praised and adored forever. Amen.



Q. 261. Why is the Holy Eucharist the center of all sacramental life?

The Holy Eucharist is the center of all sacramental life because It unites and strengthens the Church.

Baptism is the beginning of our Christian life. It initiates us into the life of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but we must grow ever more alive in this divine life by praying, receiving the sacraments, hearing the Word of God, serving others with a Christ-like attitude and faithfully fulfilling the responsibility of the present moment for the Lord.

Jesus Christ is present in the Holy Eucharist to be our Sacrifice, our Food, our Life, and our Companion, Who strengthens and nourishes us with His Flesh and Blood and Who unites us to Himself, to the Father, to the Holy Spirit, and to all the members of the Church. Therefore, the Eucharist is the center of all sacramental life in the Church.

Sacred Scripture

And all who believed were together and had all things in common... And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts. *Acts 2:44, 46*

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them. *Acts 20:7*

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Catechism of the Catholic Church

1327 In brief, the Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith: “Our way of thinking is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking.”¹

#E4-29

***Vatican Council II***

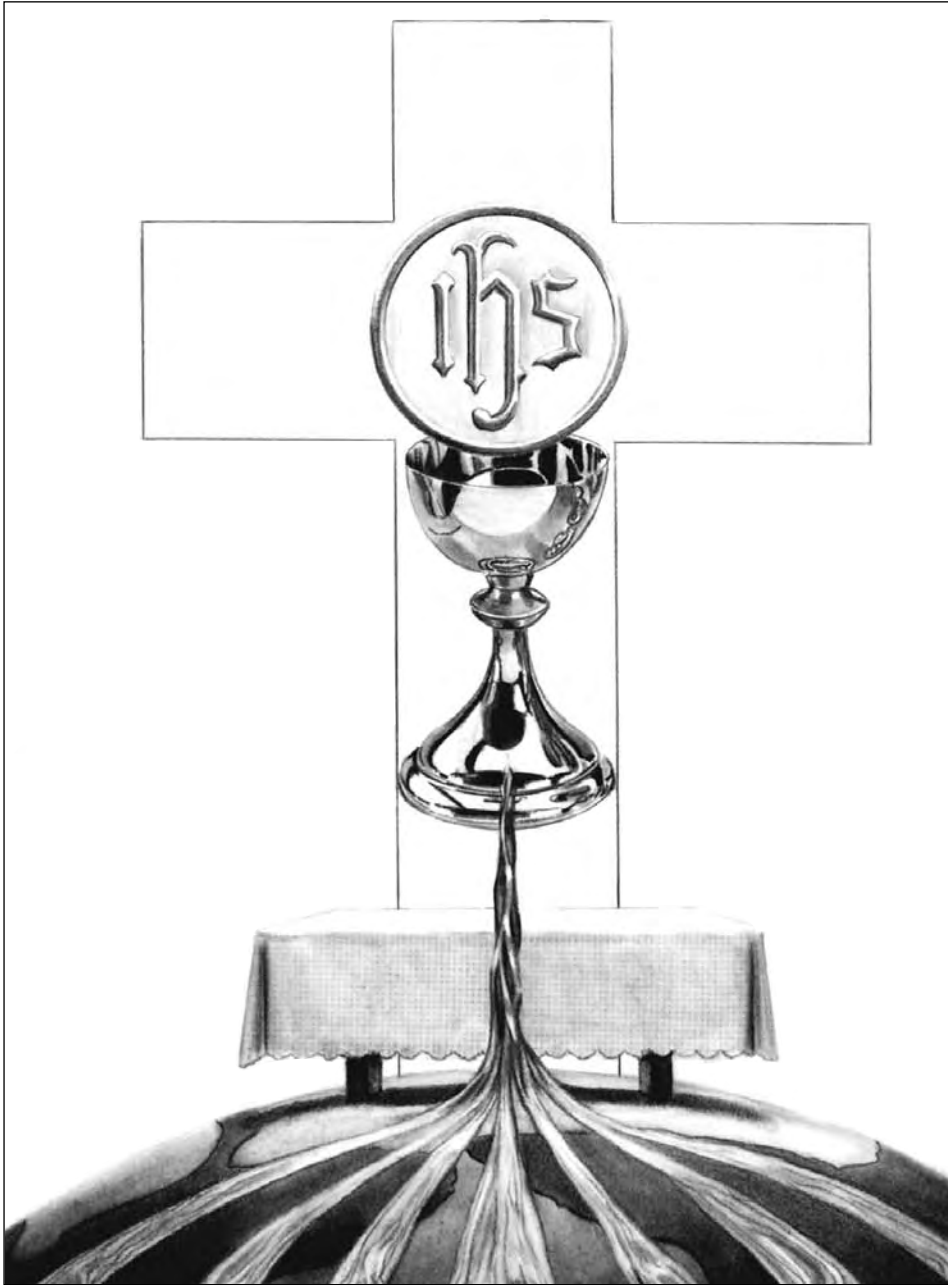
The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate are bound up with the Eucharist and are directed towards it. For in the most blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself our Pasch and the living bread which gives life to men through his flesh—that flesh which is given life and gives life through the Holy Spirit. Thus men are invited and led to offer themselves, their works and all creation with Christ. For this reason the Eucharist appears as the source and the summit of all preaching of the Gospel: catechumens are gradually led up to participation in the Eucharist, while the faithful who have already been consecrated in baptism and confirmation are fully incorporated in the body of Christ by the reception of the Eucharist. *Priests*, 5

Papal Document

“Indeed, the Eucharist is the ineffable sacrament! The essential commitment and, above all, the visible grace and source of supernatural strength for the Church as the People of God is to persevere and advance constantly in Eucharistic life and Eucharistic piety and to develop spiritually in the climate of the Eucharist. With all the greater reason, then, it is not permissible for us, in thought, life or action, to take away from this truly most holy sacrament its full magnitude and its essential meaning. It is at one and the same time a sacrifice-sacrament, a communion-sacrament, and a presence-sacrament.” *Pope John Paul II, The Redeemer of Man (Redemptor Hominis)*, 20

Catechism by Diagram

#S11-20



The Eucharist Has Primacy. The Eucharist has primacy over the other sacraments. It is of the greatest importance because it unites and strengthens the Church. By His suffering, death (cross), and Resurrection, Jesus merited for us, all of the grace (seven streams) which comes to us through the seven sacraments. At the Last Supper (table), Our Savior instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of His Body and Blood in order to continue, for all time, the sacrifice of the Cross on Calvary until He comes again. The priest, by the sacred power he has received, acting in the person of Christ (IHS), brings about the Eucharistic Sacrifice by consecrating the bread and wine, which becomes the Body and Blood of Christ that was offered for us on the Cross. The priest offers it to God in the name of all of the people (world).

Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise

1. Why is the Holy Eucharist kept in the tabernacle of our churches? How do we show our devotion to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist?
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to inspire you with specific ideas that will help your parish community to become a Eucharistic community and so become a God-centered community. Write your ideas in your spiritual journal and discuss them with your family, friends, and spiritual director or confessor.
3. Has your family visited Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament together? Make a commitment as a family to visit Jesus in the nearest perpetual Eucharistic adoration chapel for one hour each week. Thank Him for all of His blessings and ask Him to help you face all the challenges that you meet as a family in your daily lives.

#E4_6-4

**Chapter Summary Prayer**

We thank You, Divine Redeemer, for coming upon the earth for our sakes and for instituting the adorable Sacrament of the Altar in order to remain with us until the end of the world. We thank You for veiling, beneath the Eucharistic species, Your infinite majesty and beauty, which Your angels delight to behold, so that we might have the courage to approach the throne of Your mercy.

We thank You, most loving Jesus, for having made Yourself our food for the nourishment and salvation of our souls in Holy Communion. We thank You for giving Yourself to us in this Blessed Sacrament, and for so enriching It with the treasures of Your love that You have no greater gift left to give us.

We thank You also for offering Yourself as a continual sacrifice to Your Eternal Father for our salvation in Holy Mass. We thank You for offering Yourself as a sacrifice daily upon our altars, in order to give worthy adoration and thanksgiving to God and to make amends for our sins. We thank You for renewing, in this daily sacrifice, the actual sacrifice of the Cross that You offered on Calvary to satisfy divine justice for us poor sinners.

We thank You, dear Jesus, for having become the priceless Victim in order to merit for us the fullness of heavenly favors. Awaken in us great confidence in You, for You offered Yourself in thanksgiving to God to obtain for us, all His benefits, spiritual and temporal.

We thank You, dear Jesus, hidden beneath the sacramental veils. We adore You present in the tabernacle, our hidden God. You are the only Way. Make us always walk in the path of Your Commandments, following Your example, so that we may arrive at eternal salvation.

Lord, grant that, having adored Your divine Majesty here on earth in this wonderful sacrament, we may be able to adore It eternally in heaven.

Our Jesus, may You be known, adored, loved, and thanked by all devoted Christians in the most holy and divine Sacrament of the Altar! Amen.

#E4_7-3



Family Wisdom Library: Chapter 72

See Appendix A for more references.

Q. 258. Why does Jesus become present in the Holy Eucharist?

On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church, John Paul II, sect. 11, 12, 16, 17, 20;
On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, John Paul II, sect. 62;
On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist, John Paul II, sect. 3;
Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 20.

Q. 259. Why is the Holy Eucharist reserved in our churches?

On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church, John Paul II, sect. 25;
On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist, John Paul II, sect. 3;
Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 20-21.

Q. 260. What do we owe to Jesus, reserved in the Blessed Sacrament?

On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church, John Paul II, sect. 25;
On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist, John Paul II, sect. 3, 5;
Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 20.

Q. 261. Why is the Holy Eucharist the center of all sacramental life?

Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), *Vatican II*, sect. 3;
On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church, John Paul II, sect. 21;
On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, John Paul II, sect. 62-63;
On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist, John Paul II, sect. 7;
Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 20;
On Social Concern, John Paul II, sect. 48.



Thought Provokers

Please see Appendix C for the answers.

- Q. 258: May a person in the state of mortal sin receive Holy Communion?
Q. 259: What is a monstrance?
Q. 260: What is Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament?
Q. 261: When was the Holy Eucharist introduced to the Church?
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