

## Catholic 101 – Holy Eucharist

*What it means to be Catholic*

### Overview

Continuing our pursuit of what it means to be a Catholic we take a look at the Holy Eucharist.

### The Cornerstone of Catholicism

The Gospels describe Jesus as the Cornerstone the builders rejected. In a like manner Holy Eucharist is the Cornerstone of Catholicism.

There are many facets to our faith but this one stands out among all the others.

Followed by hope in the Resurrection of the body - the True Presence of Jesus – Body and Blood in the Eucharist is the basis for what we believe.



To Catholics it means the essence of what Jesus taught us. The blessed Eucharist is the primary sacrament. Baptism exists for it and all others are enriched by it. During the ministry of Jesus, He tells us what to expect in John 6:22-59 – *The Bread of Life Discourse*.

While preaching in the synagogue at Capernaum, Jesus tells His followers to eat of His flesh and blood. See John 6:22-69 - 6:32; *“So 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.”*

Many of His disciples were horrified at what they heard and they left Him. They did not understand what he meant until it was fully revealed during the Last Supper. This He did in order to perpetuate the Eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood [CCC # 1323].

### What is the Doctrine of the Eucharist?

As Catholics, an unshakable doctrine is the firm belief that Jesus is truly present in the

ordinary bread and wine in the sacrifice of the Mass.

During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the priest places his hands over the ordinary bread and wine on the altar. He says these words: *“Let your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy, so that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”* From this time on Jesus is truly present in the consecrated bread and wine.

### It means that Jesus is with us

Before Jesus ascended into heaven He told His disciples that he would be with us until the end of times. What this **means** to Catholics is that in a special way – when we receive Holy Eucharist in our bodies – Jesus is truly with us.

At every Mass, Jesus is present both in the person of the priest and in the consecrated Bread and Wine. When we receive the risen Lord in Holy Communion, we enter into the paschal mystery of salvation [CCC # 1402, 1405]. This means that there is an unbroken continuation of that sacrifice as it began almost 2000 years ago. Jesus is not crucified again – only that the sacrifice continues.

Senses can only perceive **accidents**. The priestly consecration changes the **substance** which we cannot perceive using our senses. Christ’s body remains in the communicant as long as the accident remains. That is, in the normally bodily processes they have been changed so they are no longer the accidents of bread and wine. While the Real Presence of Christ’s body ceases to exist in our bodies – through the normal bodily functions – this **means** we live on in His Mystical Body.

*Note: CCC# refers to paragraphs of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.*