

*National Council of
Catholic Women's
Study Guide*



*Based on the Encyclical Letter
of St. Pope John Paul II:
On the Eucharist
in its Relationship
to the Church*

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The encyclical *On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church* can be found on the Vatican's website or wherever Catholic books are sold.

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Introduction

Dear Friends,

To help us draw closer to the Eucharist, the NCCW Spirituality Commission has developed this study guide based on Pope St. John Paul II's Encyclical, "*On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church*."

This study guide provides questions, references, reflections, and prayers to help us deepen our relationship to the Holy Eucharist.

The guide's questions refer to specific sections of the chapters. The additional references provide further insight to the encyclical's text. The guide also provides room to make notes upon pondering the reflections, and to conclude with a prayer.

May the Holy Trinity and Mary, our Blessed Mother, give us special insight into the Holy Eucharist and our Redemption. Amen!

Thank you and God Bless,

NCCW Spirituality Commission



Chapter 1

The Mystery of Faith



1. Christ offers himself to us in the Eucharist. How do we offer ourselves in return? (#11)

References: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, CCC 1389, CCC 2042, Luke 22: 14-20

Reflection: After instituting the sacrament of Holy Communion at the Last Supper, Jesus said: "Do this in memory of me." Jesus is about to endure a most excruciating death on our behalf, and the only thing he asks is that each of us remember him by celebrating Holy Communion.

The Catholic Church tells the faithful to attend Mass on Sundays and feast days and to receive the Eucharist at least once a year during the Easter season. The Church also strongly encourages the faithful to receive the Holy Eucharist often, even daily. Jesus died to erase all my sins. Why would I not honor and remember Him as often as I am able?

Prayer

As you come to us, Dear Lord, we offer our very being to You. All of our heart, all of our prayers, all of our mind, all of our talents, all of our service are offered on the altar back to You. Amen.



2. When did you fully accept that the Eucharist is the presence of Jesus, our Lord and Savior? (#15)

Reference: CCC 1375, Mark 14: 22-25, Luke 22: 19-20

Reflection: "When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things." (1 Corinthians 13:11)

Lord, when I first received you in the most Holy Eucharist, I was a child. They told me I would be receiving Jesus. I believed with the innocence and joy of a child. But now I am an adult. No longer do I accept what I am told without question.

And yet, you are there in the Eucharist; not as a symbol; not a dramatization. The actual body of Christ, given to me; a sinner. When did I go from joyful belief to an inner peaceful knowledge?

"If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion." - St. Maximilian Kolbe

Prayer

Jesus, you give us your body, blood, soul, and divinity. As we eat your body and drink your blood, may our love for you strengthen every day. Amen.



3. How can you contribute with the light of the Gospel to making our world a better place? (#20)

References: CCC 1391-95, Rev 21:1, John: 13:1-20, 1 Cor. 11:23-26

Reflection: When we partake in Holy Communion, humanity and divinity unite within us. Our purpose is to bring that union into our world by the way we live. Living according to God's plan, we shine the light of the Gospel on the lives we touch. The Holy Eucharist gives us the strength to carry out our purpose.

The Most Blessed Sacrament augments our union with Christ, separates us from sin, and strengthens our charity. Our Lord offers himself to us in the Eucharist; we are called to offer ourselves in return. We give of ourselves by adhering to God's will, participating in Jesus' redemptive work, and following the promptings of the Holy Spirit every day of our lives.

We become conduits for the Holy Trinity to work in our lives and world. Taking part in the Holy Eucharist, we commit ourselves to the "Eucharistic life", making our world a better place. May we share the love of God with one another for the sake of peace, justice, and solidarity.

Prayer:

Grant that we who are nourished by his Body and Blood may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ. Amen.
(Eucharistic Prayer III)



4. Describe how the gift of the Eucharist can make you a better person? (#20)

References: Rev. 21:1

Reflection: All across our country during COVID we went without the Eucharist, the source and summit of our faith. The desire to receive often points to the connection of self-improvement.

Receiving the Eucharist, we enjoy the closeness of being united with our Lord. It is almost as if we are grafted to His love. According to Pope St. John Paul II: "Certainly the Christian vision leads to the expectation of 'new heavens' and 'a new earth', but this increases, rather than lessens, our sense of responsibility" [better person] for the world today.¹

Prayer

*Dear Lord,
Make me a channel of your peace.
Amen.*

¹ On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church, pg. 26, #20



5. How can we be living signs of the Eucharist in today's world? (#20)

References: CCC 1548 & 1550, Luke 18:9-14.

Reflection: This task is all the more difficult due to the increasing lack of belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, public discussions about who is worthy to receive Communion, and the sexual abuse scandal, particularly those instances which involved members of the clergy. Questions arise as to whether any sacraments performed by such persons are valid, especially if one or one's family was affected.

According to the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, "In the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ himself who is present in his Church as Head of his Body..."(CCC 1548) The **Catechism** also states, "The power of the Holy Spirit does not guarantee all acts of ministers in the same way. While this guarantee extends to the sacraments, so that even the minister's sin cannot impede the fruit of grace, in many other acts the minister leaves human traces that are not always signs of fidelity to the Gospel and consequently can harm the apostolic fruitfulness of the Church."(CCC 1550) So, no matter what a priest may have done, the sacraments he performed are valid.

To summarize, we as lay members of the Body of Christ must proclaim the truth of the Gospel by receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, remembering the lesson from the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in the Temple. (Luke 18:9-14)

In this parable, Jesus warns us to acknowledge our own sins and shortcomings, and not to take a 'holier than thou' approach to what other people may or may not have done or said. In other circumstances, we must be willing to be instruments of consolation to those who have been harmed, by urging them to report abuse to the proper authorities, to seek counseling to help with the various emotions with which they are dealing, and also to advocate justice for those who have been falsely accused of misconduct.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you have promised to be with us for all time.

Help us to be living signs of the Holy Eucharist in our troubled and dangerous world.

Guide us that we may always proclaim our unity with you, the Father, and the Holy Spirit.

Remind us that we are called to witness to the truth of the Gospel

as proclaimed by

your One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Amen

(written by Alison Mimms)





Chapter 2

The Eucharist Builds the Church



1. How does the Church grow when belief in God is on the decline? (#21)

Reference: John 15: 1-10, John 20: 21, CCC 1391-1394

Reflection: As long as the Eucharist is celebrated and adored, the Church will continue. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us who receive the Eucharist to live our Eucharistic Faith - to abide in Christ as Christ abides in each of us.

In this union, we become conduits for our Lord's loving goodness in this world. We are instruments of Christ's light of redemption and salvation. "As the Father has sent me, so I send you," said the Lord. (John 20:21)

Looking back, the Apostles "were both the seeds of the new Israel and the beginning of the sacred hierarchy."² Like the apostles and early disciples, the Eucharist gives us the strength to continue Christ's mission.

Prayer:

*Dear Lord, the great love you give to us in the Eucharist is ours to share in our daily living.
We pray in thanksgiving for your grace. Amen*



2. Do I truly appreciate the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Eucharist? (#23, 24)

Reference: CCC 1353

Reflection: At Mass, the celebrant asks God the Father to send the Holy Spirit upon the faithful and their offerings of bread and wine. By way of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus Christ to sanctify the bodies and souls of the faithful. "The church is fortified by the divine Paraclete through the sanctification of the faithful in the Eucharist."³ We receive the gift of Jesus and his Spirit in the Eucharist. Fortified by the Holy Eucharist, our mission is to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our daily living.

Prayer

Dear Lord, open my heart and soul so I may be filled with the Holy Spirit. Amen.



² On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church, pg. 29, #21

³ On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church, pg. 32, #23



3. Why should I make time for Eucharistic adoration? #25

Reference: CCC 1366-71

Reflection: Jesus Christ is forever present in the Holy Eucharist. Time spent with him outside of Mass helps us to feel his love for each of us. Christ sacrificed himself to be present in the Eucharist for the sake of our salvation.

Consider stopping by your local church on your way home from work. Look upon the tabernacle. The flame in the red glassed Eucharistic lamp tells us our Lord is present.

Pope St. John Paul II called the Eucharist “a priceless treasure.” Celebrating it and praying before it enables us “to make contact with the very well-spring of grace.”⁴ Therefore let us make time to contemplate our Lord’s presence in the Eucharist.

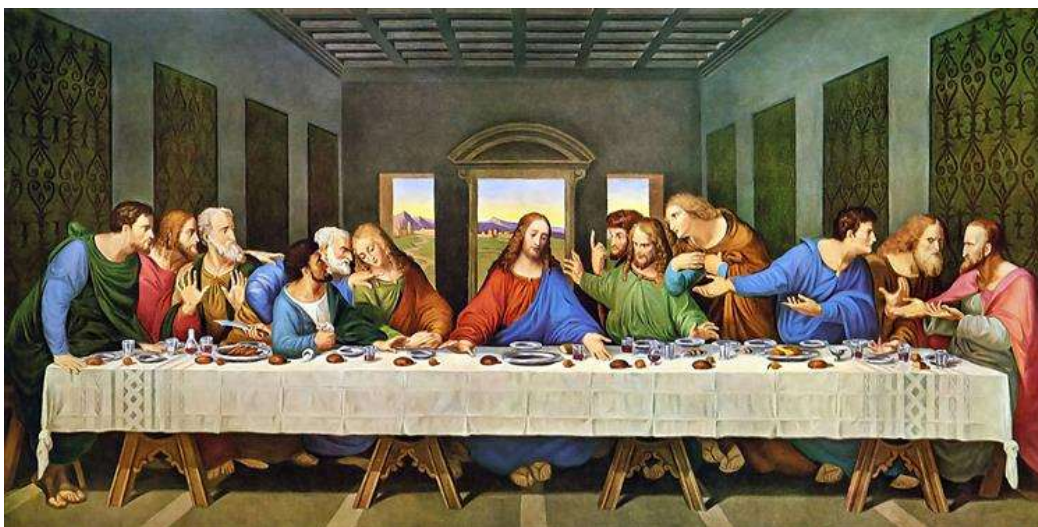
Prayer

Dear Jesus, help me to feel your presence so I may love you more and more. Amen.



NOTES

⁴ On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church, pg. 34, 35 # 25



Chapter 3

The Apostolicity of the Eucharist and of the Church



1. Describe how the Holy Eucharist is the center and summit of the priestly ministry? (#31)

References: CCC 857; Hebrews chapters 7 and 8; Psalm 132

Reflection: The priesthood came into existence on the night of the Last Supper when Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist. Jesus entrusted the Holy Eucharist to his apostles. Since that time, it has been handed down to the apostles' successors and by their successors—the priest.

The priest acts in the person of Christ. The bond that unites a priest's life and work flows from the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Christ offered up his entire being to God for the sake of our salvation from sin. This sacrifice is the center and root of the whole priestly life.

In the Eucharist, the priest finds spiritual strength to fulfill his pastoral responsibilities. Keeping faithful to his priestly vocation, daily activity becomes truly Eucharistic.

Prayer

*Heavenly Father, may your priests be clothed with justice and salvation,
may your devout shout for joy. Amen.*



2. How can you as a member of the Catholic Church support your local priests and help them remain true to their primary responsibility? (#32)

References: CCC 897

Reflection: Our priests need our prayers just as much as we need their prayers. Like any human being, the priest faces daily stresses and temptations. Given their many tasks, priests face the real risk of losing their focus.

Let us pray daily for our priests. Also, pray for vocations for the priesthood and religious life. “It is in the Eucharist that prayer for vocations is most closely united to the prayer of Christ the Eternal High Priest.”⁵

Also, as members of the Church, our participation in the Church extends beyond attending weekly Mass. We are here to love and serve our Lord. The lay faithful “are made sharers in their particular way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ, and have their own part to play in the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.” (CCC 897)

⁵ On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church, pg. 43, #31



Prayer

Dear Jesus, give your priests deep faith, strong hope, and enduring love which will grow evermore throughout their priestly life. Amen.



3. How can we keep alive in the Christian community a genuine hunger for the Eucharist? (#33)

References: CCC 901, 1392, 1394

Reflection: The nourishment we receive in the Holy Eucharist cannot be replaced by any other nourishment. The Eucharist feeds our body, mind, heart, and soul with God's graces. The Eucharist augments our union with the Lord, separates us from sin, and strengthens our charity.

When we partake in Holy Communion, we also promise to partake in our Lord's work of redemption and salvation. By proclaiming his death, we also proclaim the forgiveness of sins. Christ offered up himself to God so that we may have eternal life. In the Eucharist, we receive our Lord's gift of Love to save us from sin.

We too can offer up ourselves in the name of Jesus for the sake of redemption and salvation. The Eucharist gives us strength for our daily work, prayers, family life, as well as dealing with our hardships. All of this can be offered up as a gift of love in the celebration of the Eucharist. Doing so, we live for God.

Our growth in "Christian life needs the nourishment of Eucharistic Communion" (CCC 1392). To keep alive our hunger for the Eucharist, let us strive for holiness. The more we do in the name of God, the more we will want to do, and the more we will need the Eucharist's nourishment.

Prayer

*Dear Lord, by your nourishment in the Holy Eucharist,
may I always use your given strength
in accordance with your will.
Amen*





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Chapter 4

The Eucharist and Ecclesial Communion



1. How do we convey the ecclesial communion to others? (#39)

References: CCC 1354, 1397

Reflection: According to Pope St. John Paul II, Sunday Mass is vital in promoting ecclesial communion among the faithful and that pastors must make it possible for everyone to attend. When we come together at Mass, we are united with all Catholics throughout the world, with the Pope and the bishops, particularly the bishop of our own diocese. “In fact, the community, in receiving the Eucharistic presence of the Lord, receives the entire gift of salvation and shows, even in its lasting visible particular form that it is the image and true presence of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.”⁶

When we go out into the world after receiving Holy Communion with millions of faithful all over the world, we become a living sign of our unity as Catholics. We have received Christ Himself, and we must be ambassadors for Him in our troubled and dangerous world. Consider the following: The problem for us as Catholics doesn’t come from atheists or agnostics—we can recognize them by their public statements in the media or on billboards. The real danger is from those who are indifferent—they don’t care and don’t want to be involved in any way with religion—they won’t rise to defend us, and they are becoming a new “silent majority.”

The challenge for us from our Lord is to be visible signs of His love and to share that with everyone not by handing out leaflets or going from door to door, but by letting our light shine before others so that they can see our good works and give glory to our Father in heaven.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, it is difficult for us to live in today’s world and to remain faithful to You and Your Church. Give us the strength and courage that comes from our union with all your faithful people to be living signs of that ecclesial communion to everyone. Amen



2. What is the ultimate goal of every human desire? (#43)

Reference: CCC 1324-1327

Reflection: The ultimate goal of every human desire is to attain life everlasting in God’s presence. God joins himself to us in the most perfect union in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. It is good for us to cultivate in our hearts a constant desire for the Sacrament of the Eucharist. And secondly, to make a spiritual communion if not attending Mass or receiving communion.

⁶ On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church, pg. 50, #39



Prayer:

Dear Jesus, help me to be seeking to join my heart with yours and to build a perfect union with you in receiving your Body and Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Eucharist. Amen



3 How are the two sacraments, Eucharist and Penance connected? (#37)

References: 1 Corinthians 11:27-29, CCC 1415, Canon 991

Reflection: The Sacrament of Reconciliation is vital to the Sacrament of the Eucharist—they cannot be separated from each other. St. Paul wrote, “Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.” (1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “Anyone who desires to receive Christ in Eucharistic communion must be in the state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of penance.” (CCC 1415)

An examination of conscience is part of the Sacrament of Penance—there are various forms available in prayer books or online. We are encouraged to use these forms on a regular basis—we must be honest with ourselves without making excuses or being overly scrupulous. We must not become like the Pharisee praying in the Temple by comparing ourselves with others but concentrate on our own faults and failings.

Pastors are obliged to offer the Sacrament of Penance on a regular basis in their parishes, and reminders of its availability from the pulpit or in the bulletin are highly appropriate, but according to the Code of Canon Law, “All Christ’s faithful are free to confess their sins to lawfully approved confessors of their own choice, even to one of another rite.” (Canon 991) If the time for the sacrament in one’s parish doesn’t work for an individual, it is perfectly acceptable to go to another parish.

When we have received the Sacrament of Penance and then receive Holy Communion, we are strengthened by the Sacrament of the Eucharist to live a holy life of love and service to our families, parishes, communities, our country, and the world. Regular reception of both sacraments is absolutely necessary for these actions to be effective. In the words of Pope St. John Paul II, “Because the Eucharist makes present the redeeming sacrifice of the Cross, perpetuating it sacramentally, it naturally gives rise to a continuous need for conversion...”⁷

⁷ On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church, pg. 48, #37



Prayer:

*Lord Jesus, you have given us Yourself in the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist.
May we always strive to receive them regularly with honesty and humility.
May we be strengthened in
our faith to be witness of Your love and truth to everyone in our lives,
in our Church,
community and the world.
Amen*



4. How does the Eucharist create and foster communion and unity? (#40)

Reference: CCC 873 and 820-822, 1 Cor 11:17-34

Reflection: There is a desire felt by the faithful throughout the world for unity among Christians. We are brought together in that unity in the Eucharist. St. Paul urges us to reflect on the true reality of the Eucharist in order to return to the spirit of fraternal communion. According to Pope St. John Paul II: “The Eucharist’s particular effectiveness in promoting communion is one of the reasons for the importance of attending Sunday Mass.”⁸ The Mass brings us together in unity. We are made into one body in Christ by receiving Jesus’s body and blood in communion.

Coming together often creates that bond of unity. Coming together often fosters the communion of the faithful. Unity is of the essence of the Church.

Prayer:

*Dear Father in heaven, we thank you for the Holy Spirit.
We pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire the bonds of communion
to be fully established so that we ALL have a burning desire to celebrate in unity.
May every human being on earth,
be united with you in one spirit, one union,
through this one communion in Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

⁸ On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church, pg. 52, #41



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Chapter 5

The Dignity of the Eucharistic Celebration



1. The sacred Eucharist banquet provides continuity throughout the church. Do I appreciate the liturgical norms as a reflection of the universal church? #49

References: Lumen Gentium 11; Sacrosanctum Concilium 21

Reflection: The Liturgy of the Word. The Liturgy of the Eucharist. No matter what Catholic Church you visit the beauty of Mass is the same. My participation is not rote but instead an integral part of the greatness of the celebration.

The USCCB speaks on the participation in the Mass: *The Liturgy is designed to bring about in all those who make up the worshipping assembly "a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful both in body and in mind, a participation burning with faith, hope, and charity."*⁹

The Liturgy, then, is about the action of God's own people, each with different offices and roles. When we play our roles in the Liturgy with our bodies, minds, and hearts fully engaged, we give to God a perfect sacrifice of praise.

Prayer:

*Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me,
a sinner. Amen*



2. The centerpiece of each Catholic Church is its altar. Do I prepare my soul to celebrate at the Altar of the Lord as the Apostles prepared the upper room? #47

References: Deuteronomy 27:1-8; Isaiah 40; Luke 22:7-13; CCC 1383

Reflection: (Mark 14:13-14) "He sent two of his disciples and said to them, 'Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, 'Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'"

The altar prepared for our salvation just as our Lord told his Apostles to go and prepare the upper room so they could celebrate the Passover. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, *"The altar, around which the Church is gathered in the celebration of the Eucharist, represents the two aspects of the same mystery: the altar of the sacrifice and the table of the Lord. This is all the more so since the Christian altar is the symbol of Christ himself, present in the midst of the assembly of his faithful, both as the victim offered for our reconciliation and as food from heaven who is giving himself to us. 'For what is the altar of Christ if not the image of the Body of Christ?' asks St. Ambrose. He says elsewhere, 'The altar represents the body [of Christ] and the Body of Christ is on the altar.'"* (CCC 1383)

⁹ General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #18.



Prayer:

"O my God, come to me, so that You may dwell in me, and I may dwell in you."

St. John Vianney



3. Do I see the Eucharist as the treasure it is? #51

Reference: Exodus 40; Luke 22:14-20; CCC 1385, Mark 14:22-24

Reflection: Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. He said, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many." (Mark 14: 22-24)

When I receive our Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist, where is my mind? Has it wandered to the breakfast I have to make or the store I have to go to after Mass? Or is my mind focused on receiving our Lord. Have I prepared my soul? Did I run out of time to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation or did I choose not to go?

Prayer:

Prayer of Saint Thomas Aquinas:

"Ad Sacrosanctum Sacramentum"

O sacred banquet at which

Christ is consumed,

The memory of His Passion recalled,

our soul filled with grace,

and our pledge of future glory received:

How delightful, Lord, is Your spirit,

which shows Your sweetness to men,

offers the precious bread of heaven,

fills the hungry with good things,

and sends away empty the scornful rich.

V. You have given them bread from heaven.

R. A bread having all sweetness within it.

Let us pray:

God, Who left for us a memorial of Your Passion in this miraculous sacrament, Grant we implore You, that we may venerate the holy mystery of Your Body and Blood, so that we may ever experience in ourselves the fruitfulness of Your redemption.

You who live and reign, world without end. Amen.

(Translation from The Aquinas Prayer Book, Sophia Institute Press)



Chapter 6

At the School of Mary, “Woman of the Eucharist”



1. How can Mary our Blessed Mother guide us toward the Holy Eucharist? (#53)

References: Redemptoris Mater #21; John 2:5

Reflection: Mary is our example of true discipleship--always following God's will with faith, hope, and love. God entrusts us to Mary. As our guide and intercessor, Mary draws us gently to her Son Jesus Christ our Savior who gives us his body and blood in the Holy Eucharist.

Mary guides us by example, embracing the way, the truth, and the life of Jesus. As Mary said to the wine servers at the Wedding Feast at Cana, "Do whatever he tells you." (John 2:5) Christ tells us to eat his body and drink his blood for the sake of our salvation. Therefore, when we accept the Holy Eucharist into our bodies, we also accept Mary's call to trust and obey her Son without hesitation.

Prayer:

*Hail holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.
to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn then, O most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile,
show unto us
the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!
Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen*



2. To understand Mary's relationship with the Eucharist, describe her interior disposition. (# 53, 54)

References: Redemptoris Mater #14; CCC 492

Reflection: Mary is a "Woman of the Eucharist" in her whole life. Without the stain of sin, Mary was pure of heart and mind, body, and soul. Unwavering in faith and trust, Mary believed the Word of God would be fulfilled.

With Mary's yes at the Annunciation, God entrusted Mary with the Son of Man by way of the Holy Spirit. Within Mary, humanity, and divinity united. The Word became flesh through Mary's body and blood.

Therefore, our Blessed Mother herself has a profound relationship with the Eucharist as her relationship with Jesus is Mother to Son. That bond is a forever bond with full faith, hope, and love.



Prayer:

REMEMBER, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided.

Inspired with this confidence, I fly to thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother; to thee do I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful.

O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.



3. Compare Mary's acceptance of Christ in her womb with our acceptance of the Lord's body and blood in the Eucharist. (#55)

References: Luke 1:38; CCC 506

Reflection: Mary accepted Jesus into her body, her womb, with an open loving heart. From that moment, Mary is forever united with Jesus by way of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High. Mary became a conduit for the Holy Trinity to do its work of salvation in the world.

When we accept Jesus in the Eucharist (body and blood) into our bodies, we welcome him Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Within us, humanity and divinity unite. Like Mary, we too can be conduits for the Holy Trinity's work. We do a disservice to the Holy Eucharist if we do not allow its power to augment our bond with the Lord, separate us from sin, and increase our charity.

Prayer:

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

*Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.*



4. Describe how you can be a “tabernacle” for Christ. (#55)

References: Luke 1:42, 45; CCC 484, 485, 489

Reflection: In Church, the tabernacle holds the Holy Eucharist—Jesus is present. By receiving the Holy Eucharist, Jesus' body and blood, we become a tabernacle because we are placing Jesus' body and blood into our own body. Jesus is present within us.

Remember, Mary became the first tabernacle, holding the body and blood of Jesus within her. Although Jesus was out of sight, he radiated through Mary at the Visitation. There, our Lord shined upon Mary's cousin Elizabeth, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. May our Lord's presence shine through each of us with every person we meet.



Prayer:

*Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within your wounds hide me.
Separated from you let me never be.
From the malignant enemy, defend me.
At the hour of death, call me.
And close to you bid me.
That with your saints I may be praising you,
for all eternity.
Amen*



5. In what way can Mary's unparalleled model of love for Christ inspire us each time we receive the Holy Eucharist? (#56, 57)

References: CCC 511, Luke 1: 38, Luke 22:19, John 19: 26, 27

Reflection: As we welcome Jesus into our body when we receive the Eucharist, look to Mary as a model for her love of Jesus. Stated in the Second Preface of Advent: “the Virgin Mother longed for him with love beyond all telling”.¹⁰

Giving birth and cradling Jesus in her loving arms, Mary had much to ponder. When she and Joseph presented Jesus in the Temple, Simeon told her that a sword would pierce her heart.

Undoubtedly Mary prayed every day that God would protect her Son, and said repeatedly, "I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1: 38) Mary's love for our Lord is far greater than any pain she endured; that love Our Lady shares with us.

As Pope St. John Paul II states in the encyclical #57, “‘Do this in remembrance of me’ (Luke 22:19). In the “memorial” of Calvary all that Christ accomplished by his passion and his death is present. Consequently, all that Christ did with regard to his Mother for our sake is also present. To her he gave the beloved disciple and, in him, each of us: ‘Behold, your Son!’ To each of us he also says: ‘Behold your mother!’ (John 19: 26, 27).” We continue receiving Mary as our mother when we experience the memorial of Christ's death in the Eucharist.

As with Mary, God will not always let us see into the future because He wants us to live in the present moment which is all we have. Therefore, each time we receive the Eucharist we must say, "Lord, I love you above all things. I am your servant. Let your will be done in me. Help me to

¹⁰ Daily Roman Missal, #34



love you more and more and may your Blessed Mother, who loves you beyond all telling, be my source of comfort and guidance."

Prayer:

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of thy mercy.

Amen.



6. How does Mary help us conform to Christ? (#57)

References: John 19: 26-27; Luke 1:45; Matthew 20:28

Reflection: Mary helps us to conform to Christ by calling us to pray, especially the Rosary. The mysteries teach us how to live. Like Mary, we are called to adhere to God's will, participate in Jesus' redemptive work, and follow the Holy Spirit's prompting. Praying the Rosary faithfully, we are Mary's beloved children.

Mary draws us to her Son so we may embrace the way, the truth, and the life of Christ as Mary did. We make a commitment to conform to Christ. We make a commitment to God. For this commitment, we receive graces and blessing from Heaven through Mary's intercession and protection.

Prayer:

O God, whose only begotten Son, by His life, death and Resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life.

grant, we beseech Thee, that meditating on these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ Our Lord.

Amen.



7. Describe how Mary's Magnificat can become a Magnificat that expresses our spirituality? (#58)

References: CCC 494

Reflection: Through Him, with Him and in Him. This is the Eucharistic attitude. The Eucharist has been given to us so that our life, like that of Mary, may become completely a Magnificat.

The gift of the Holy Eucharist increases the gift of the Holy Spirit within our soul. Our soul animates our lives. When we are truly open to our Lord and all of his graces, we proclaim the greatness of the Lord. We have reason to rejoice! Through the Eucharist, we are given the way to hold Christ within us. By living within us, Christ lives through us. Christ radiated through Mary during her visitation with her cousin Elizabeth and Elizabeth recognized her Savior through Mary.



Can we recognize Christ among ourselves and through one another? Yes, the Almighty has done great things for us. He came down from heaven and became man to live among us, to heal us, and to show us the way to eternal life. He sacrificed himself to conquer sin for our sake. He humbled himself to be present within the tiniest particle of the holy Eucharist to nourish our soul. He truly fills the hungry with good things.

He fills us with himself. He gives us his Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity so that our lives shine the Lord's light in our world that desperately needs God's love.

Prayer:

*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be forever.
Amen.*





Conclusion

Today we face many challenges to our faith. The Eucharist gives us the strength we need for our journey of Christian living. “In the Eucharist we have Jesus, we have his redemptive sacrifice, we have his resurrection, we have the gift of the Holy Spirit, we have adoration, obedience, and love of the Father.” ¹¹

The Eucharist gives us everything we need to be true to our faith and to be true to one another. Therefore, let us not squander the treasures of the Eucharist. Let us savor every morsel of the Eucharist and every moment we spend in Eucharistic adoration.

Nourished by our Savior’s presence within us, our lives are transformed. Our faith and love renewed; we are witnesses of hope. Now let us go in peace to love and serve our Lord. Amen!

Additional citations: CCC 697; Micah 5:2-4; Rev 12: 10-12; Rev 19:9; Psalm 119; Redemptoris Mater 41; Genesis 12:2; Exodus 40: 34-35

¹¹ On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church, pg. 74



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