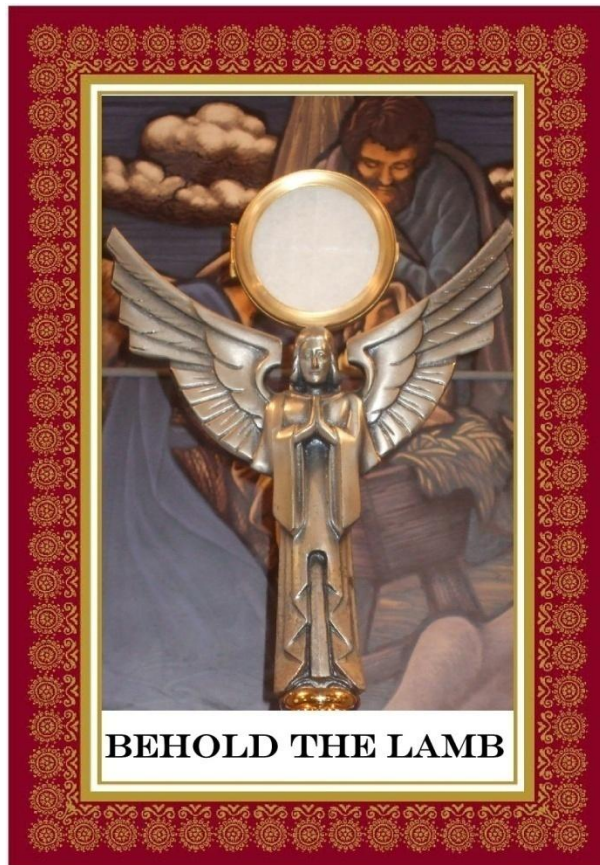


# What is the Eucharist?

## A Reflection



The Holy Eucharist is the source, center and summit of Catholic/Orthodox life. It is the wellspring of our being and doing each moment of each day.

The entire Mosaic Law is contained in the first great commandment of GOD..

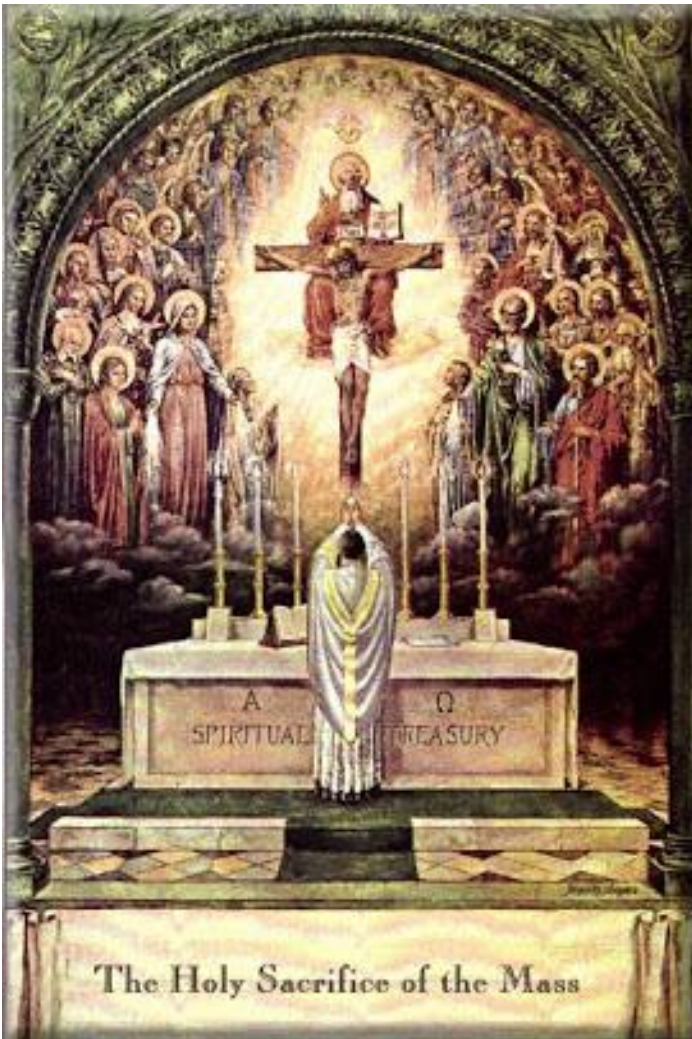
**"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our GOD, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your GOD, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength."**

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

In His passion, GOD commanded His people to **drill** these words into their children - to **speak** of them at home and abroad, whether they were busy or at rest. He told them to **bind** these words at their wrist as a sign and to **wear** them as a pendant on their foreheads. He told them to **write** them on the doorposts of their houses and on their gates.

The Eucharist **IS** GOD. It is pre-eminently **HERE** that Orthodox and Catholic Christians fulfill the first great commandment of **GOD**. This is our passion.

The Eucharist is not peripheral to our lives. It is not my life + the Eucharist. The Eucharist is **ALL**. Pervading all - sustaining all - the wellspring of **ALL** our Being and Doing. The Eucharist is **JESUS**. Apart from Him we can do **NOTHING!!**



The Catholic Mass/  
Orthodox Liturgy is  
not conducted from a  
pulpit, but before a  
sacrificial altar.

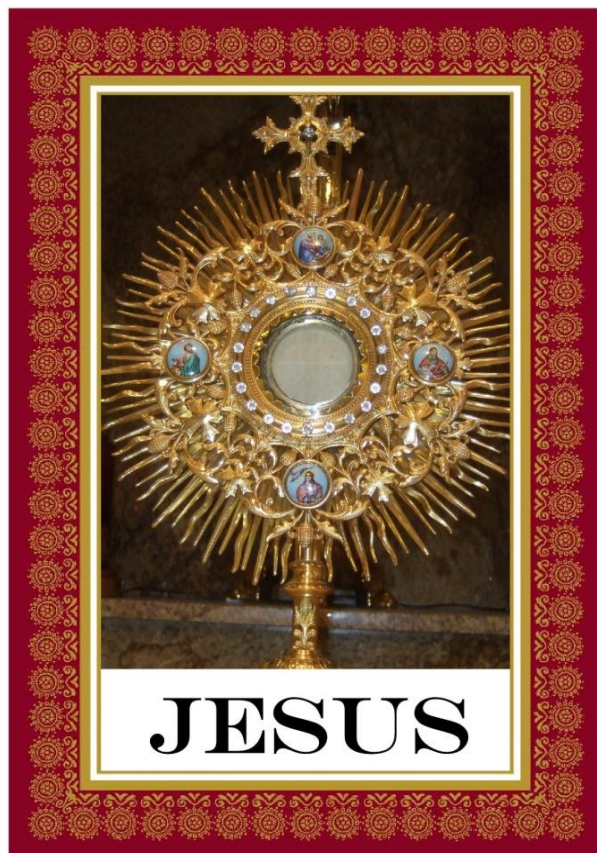
The Heart of the  
Mass/Liturgy is not  
the priest's sermon,  
but...

...the sacrifice  
of **JESUS** Christ,  
the Lamb of **GOD**  
upon the **Cross** at  
Calvary...

...re-presented  
on that altar.

The worship we offer *GOD* is not simply through music, word, and prayer - but **JESUS** Christ Himself, Who is both our great High Priest **and** the sacrificial Lamb upon the altar - through the person of the Catholic/ Orthodox priest - offers His life, death and resurrection to the Most Holy Trinity, in the **re-presentation of His sacrifice** upon Calvary, so that we may be reconciled with the Father through the forgiveness of our sins and *GOD's* Spirit may flow once again to, in and through us.

Then, when we receive **JESUS** in the Holy Eucharist in a state of grace, (See: Examination of the heart) all Three Persons of the Undivided Trinity, *GOD* the Father, *GOD* the Son and *GOD* the Holy Spirit, are present within us, making us temples of *GOD*. (I Corinthians 3:16)



What is the Eucharist? Not what - but **WHO!** The Eucharist is **JESUS**.

He is the **Living Bread** that comes down from heaven every time a Catholic/Orthodox priest speaks the words of **JESUS** over the bread and wine of the Mass.

In the Person of **JESUS**, the priest says: " This is My Body..." and by the Word of *GOD* and the power of the Holy Spirit, **the bread becomes the true Body of Christ**.

In the Person of JESUS, the priest says: " This is the cup of My Blood..." and by the Word of GOD and the power of the Holy Spirit, **the wine becomes the true Blood of Christ.**

The same JESUS Who lived 2000 years ago, lives with us today in the Holy Eucharist, just as He promised... " I am with you always, unto the end of the world."

Two thousand years ago, just as today, many disciples of JESUS rejected the Eucharist, saying: "This saying is hard: who can accept it?" and "As a result of this many of His disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied Him."

Here are just a few of the sayings that scandalized them...



"My Flesh is true food, and My Blood is true drink." John 6:55

" Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you do not have life within you."

" Whoever eats my Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day."

" Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood remains in Me and I in him." John 6:53-56

When His disciples quarreled and said: " How can this man give us His Flesh to eat?" **JESUS made no attempt to correct their understanding.**

He **did not** deny the import of His words. Even as they left him to return to their former way of life, **He made no attempt to correct them.**

He did not call after them saying: " Come back! I meant that the bread and wine are **symbols** of My Body and Blood!" No. The only explanation JESUS offered was...



" The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life."

In other words, His words are a mystery. How bread and wine become the True Body and Blood of JESUS is a mystery - but it IS so.

JESUS did not offer the Twelve Apostles any further explanation either.

But, willing to lose **everything** over this doctrine of His True Body and Blood, which would be the soul of His Church until the end of the world, He asked the

Twelve... "Do you also want to leave?"

And Peter, as all ardent Orthodox and Catholic Christians do today, replied by faith in the One he loved... " Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

In other words - we don't understand, but we trust You. And though Your words are mysterious, they are LIFE.

For in the Holy Eucharist, we become **one body and one spirit** with our Lord JESUS Christ, whose Name means "Anointed Life-Giver." Then, as living members of His Mystical Body we bear Him - LIFE - within our souls out into all the world.

This is the union and communion with GOD that we were **all** created for. A perpetual communion of Being and Doing which, for Orthodox and Catholic Christians, begins in sacramental communion with JESUS Christ the Son of GOD in the Blessed Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist, and continues through a life of spiritual communion, as we learn to **remain** in Him unceasingly. (See: The Spiritual Visit)

For scripture references - see Matthew Chapter 26,  
Verses 26-29, 28:20 & John Chapter 6, Verses 35-69  
[www.schoolofprayerhcbvm.com](http://www.schoolofprayerhcbvm.com)