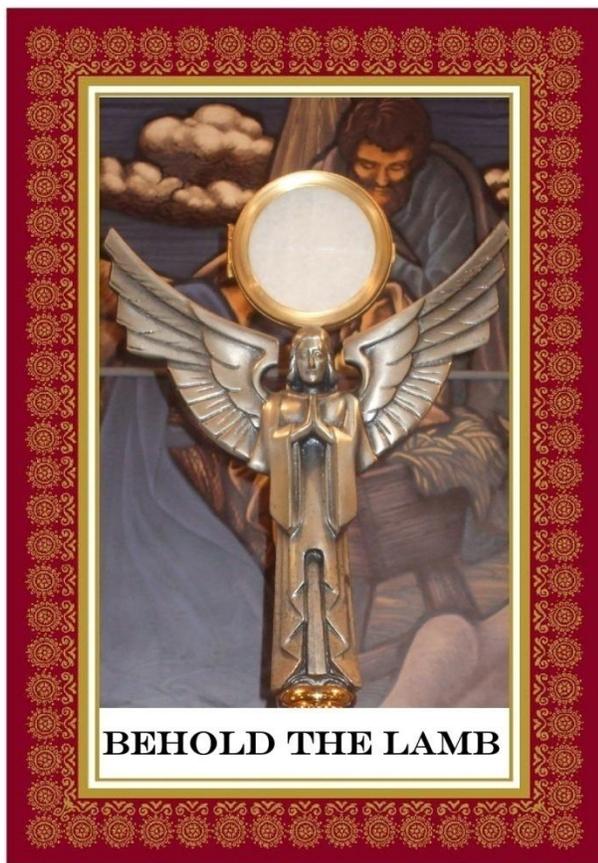


What is the Eucharist?

A Reflection

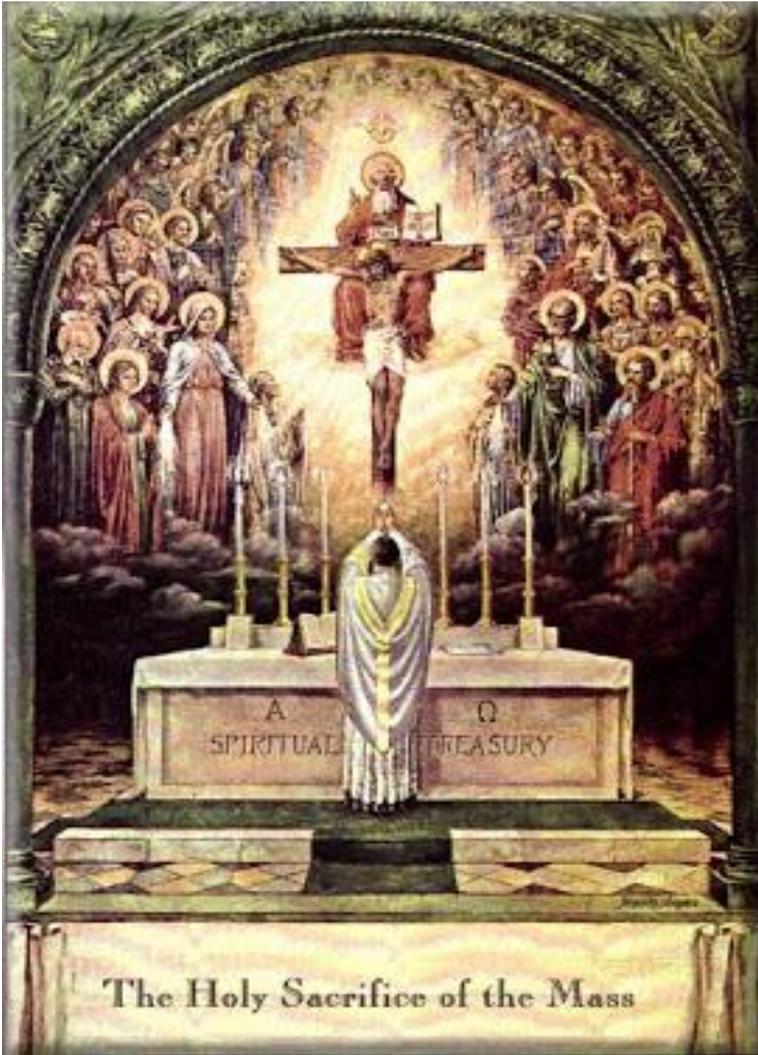


The Holy Eucharist is the source, center and summit of Catholic/Orthodox life. It is the wellspring of our being and doing each moment of each day.

The Eucharist is **GOD**. It is pre-eminently **HERE** that Orthodox and Catholic Christians fulfill 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

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.

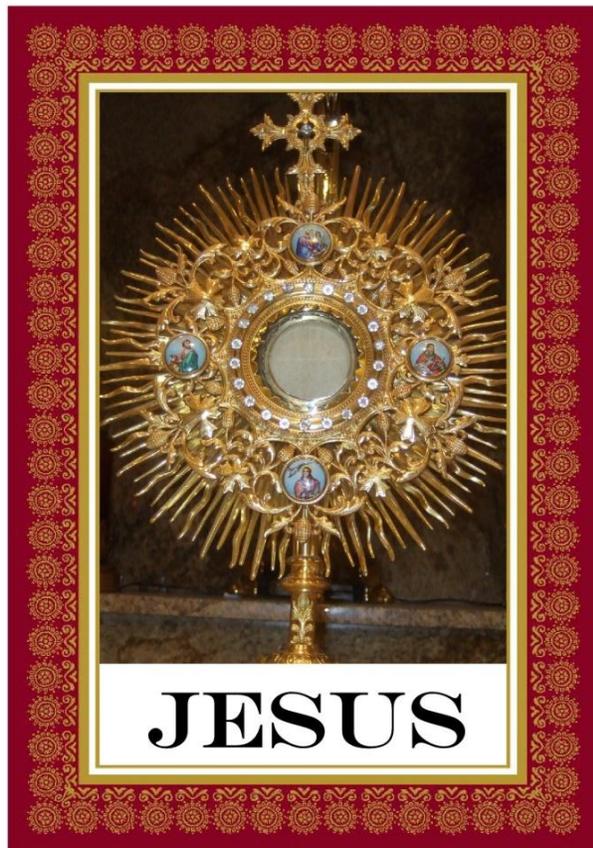
The Heart of the
Mass/Liturgy is not
the priest's sermon,
but is...

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

...re-presented
on that altar at the
heart of the paschal
mystery.

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, resurrection and ascension to the Most Holy Trinity, in the **re-presentation of the paschal mystery to the Father...** and GOD's glorious Work of Redemption is manifest to all of Creation.

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: JESUS BEADS)

For scripture references - see Matthew Chapter 26, Verses 26-29, 28:20 & John Chapter 6, Verses 35-69

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