

**Holy Trinity Catholic Church**  
**RCIA Class Transcript**  
**The Holy Eucharist**  
**Lecturer: Father Francis Peffley**  
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Tonight's topic is the most important one of the entire year. The topic we're going to be discussing is the *Holy Eucharist*, which is the Body and Blood of Christ we receive every Sunday at Mass. The Eucharist is one of the seven sacraments that Christ established during His time on Earth, two thousand years ago.

This is a very brief refresher about a *sacrament*. The word "sacrament" means "a holy thing." "Sacra" means "holy" in Latin. There are seven sacraments in the Catholic Church. These are the channels of God's graces to the world; Christ established all seven sacraments. The definition of a sacrament is "a visible sign, instituted by Christ, to give grace."

Those three things are very important. It's *visible*; for example, the pouring of water at Baptism, or changing the bread and wine which becomes the Body and Blood of Christ, or anointing somebody with the oil, or doing their wedding. It's something *visible* – a visible sign. And remember, that it was instituted by Christ. The Church did not make up these seven sacraments; these were established by Christ 2,000 years ago. And third is *to give grace*. *Grace* is "God's power, God's life, and God's love." So we have seven sacraments, or seven channels, of graces in the world today that the Lord has left us 2,000 years ago.

The first of all the sacraments is *Baptism*. Baptism is the sacrament that makes us "Children of God." Baptism washes away Original Sin. If we get baptized as adults, it washes all sins ever committed in your entire life. Baptism cleanses us; it gives us the new life of God's grace within our soul, making us Children of God.

The second sacrament we receive is *Penance*, or *Confession*. Penance takes away any sins we have committed since the time of our Baptism.

Third is the *Eucharist*, which is our topic for tonight, which is the Body and Blood of Christ.

Then comes *Confirmation*. Confirmation is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives, through the anointing of oil, usually by the Bishop.

After that, there's either *Matrimony* or *Holy Orders*, which is becoming a deacon or a priest. Holy Orders is when a man devotes himself to the diaconate or the priesthood; Matrimony, when a baptized husband and wife make their vows in a Christian Church.

Lastly, the *Anointing of the Sick*. It used to be called “Extreme Unction.” We refer to it now as “The Anointing of the Sick.”

Those are the seven sacraments. Tonight we’re going to focus on the most important one, the Eucharist, because all the other sacraments lead us to Christ, but the Eucharist *is* Christ; that’s an important distinction.

There are many different titles for the Eucharist. In fact, the word “Eucharist” comes from a Greek word which means “thanksgiving.” In Scripture, it says, “Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘This is My Body.’” So, the word that the Church decided to use for “The Body of Christ” is “Eucharista” in Greek, or “Eucharist”, the “giving thanks,” where Jesus offers thanks to the Heavenly Father.

There are many other titles of the Blessed Sacrament. I just mentioned one: the “Blessed Sacrament,” sometimes called the “Most Blessed Sacrament.” Out of all the sacraments, this is the most sacred, the most blessed. In another way, we refer to the Eucharist as “Holy Communion.” We refer to a child making his or her “First Holy Communion.” “Communion” means “union with.” “Comm,” the Latin word meaning “with,” and then “union”; “union with.” This is when we get to receive Christ, to become one with Christ in Holy Communion.

When somebody is dying, we give them *Viaticum*. Viaticum means “the food for the journey.” “Via,” like the “Via Dolorosa,” is “the road,” or “the way.” Viaticum means “to take with you on the journey.” So, we refer to this as “Last Rites.” When somebody receives the Lord for the last time, they receive Viaticum; the Lord goes with you to eternal life. You receive that at your last Communion.

Other titles for the Eucharist are:

- “The Bread of Heaven”
- “The Heavenly Bread”
- “The Bread of Angels”

Sometimes, when we refer to the Lord in Communion, we refer to the Host as “The Sacred Host.” The word “host” comes from the Latin word “hostia” which means “the victim,” because Christ is both priest and victim. He offers Himself, but He’s also the One who was offered. Jesus offered Himself to the Father; so Christ is both priest and victim. When the priest at Mass holds up the Host, that is Christ. He offers Himself to the Father.

The Eucharist is the most blessed of all the sacraments. It was foreshadowed in the Old Testament. There are a couple of different places where the Eucharist is foreshadowed or foretold. The first one is the *manna in the desert*. That was the special bread that God fed the People with. It says, “The Israelites went out, and they collected this manna, and God gave them enough to last for 40 years in the desert.” The word “manna” comes from a Hebrew word which means “what is it”,

because they didn't know what it was; so they called it "what is it" bread. That's what manna is. God fed his People as they journeyed through the desert to get to the Promised Land. The manna foreshadows a greater reality, which is the Eucharist, because the Lord in Communion is "Our Daily Bread," that helps us get to the promised land of Heaven. Right now we're going through the "Valley of Tears"; we're going through the desert. But, we're looking forward to being with Christ one day in Heaven.

Those of you that are "Lord of the Rings" fans, by Tolkien, if you've seen the movies or read the books, will notice that the elves gave the hobbits the "lembas" bread, or the "waybread." This nourished them as they went on their pilgrimage to destroy the ring. Tolkien, being a very devout Catholic, threw a lot of Catholic ideas into his writing. One idea was that this bread nourished the hobbits; it gave them strength and courage to fulfill their job. This is what the Eucharist does for us. It's our daily sustenance to help get us to Heaven.

Another way to look in the Old Testament at something that foreshadowed the Eucharist is the *Ark of the Covenant*. The Ark, within itself, contained the Ten Commandments, a piece of Aaron's rod, as well as a jar of manna. The Israelites saved some of the manna, and placed it in the Ark of the Covenant. We know that the Blessed Mother is the New Ark of the Covenant, because she contained, within her, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

We should also see that every *tabernacle* is also an Ark of the Covenant. Back here, in the Blessed Sacrament chapel, is a tabernacle. It's a gold container or receptacle, or a gold box. The Lord is placed in there in Holy Communion. Our modern day tabernacles are really the New Arks of the Covenant – they contain Christ.

A very important Old Testament image also is *The Lamb of God*, or *The Paschal Lamb*. The word "paschal" means "the Passover lamb." The Paschal Lamb is very important in the history of Judaism. The Paschal Lamb was sacrificed. The blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the doorposts, and the Angel of Death "passed over." That's where we get the word "Passover." The Angel passed over any house that had the lamb's blood on the doorpost. That prefigured or foreshadowed Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away our sins. Jesus covers us with His Blood, when He died on the Cross, and that merited our salvation. Jesus paid the price for our sins by dying on the Cross.

The Old Testament Paschal Lamb had to be a male lamb. It had to be one year of age, and it was unblemished; it had to be perfect – it could have no defects. That foreshadowed Christ, the spotless, pure Lamb of God. Even John the Baptist pointed out and said, when he saw Christ, "There is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world."

At the Mass, after the Consecration, which is the moment when the bread and wine becomes the Body and Blood of Christ, the priest holds up the Eucharist and says, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." We see that Christ is that Lamb, foreshadowed by the Passover Lamb, the Paschal Lamb.

In the Old Testament, as you remember, God told the Israelites that if they sacrificed a lamb, their firstborn son would not be killed. The lamb died in place of the firstborn son. That shows how Jesus died in our place. He took our place on the Cross. He said, "I will die, so that you can live forever."

Another very important image, I would encourage you to look up Psalm 110, where it talks about Melchizedek. Melchizedek was, in the Old Testament, the only one who was both a priest and a king. Sometimes in the Old Testament, you had someone like King David, who was a king, but he wasn't a priest. Or, you have Old Testament priests, but they weren't kings. Melchizedek is the only one who was both a priest and a king. Melchizedek offered gifts of bread and wine. That was unique, because everybody else was offering sacrifices of lambs, and bullocks, and bloody sacrifices. They offered animal sacrifices. The priests in the Old Testament were the ones who slaughtered the animals for the sacrifice in the Temple. They felt that was pleasing to God. They would sacrifice their best oxen, their best goat, or their best lamb. There was one man who offered an unbloodied sacrifice. He offered, instead of a goat or a lamb, he offered bread and wine. This foreshadowed Christ, who would be both God and man. He would be both a priest and a king. He would offer bread and wine at the Last Supper. Christ, at the Last Supper, offered an unbloodied sacrifice. He offered bread and wine at the Last Supper.

There's also a passage in Malachi, which is a Book of the Old Testament. Malachi, Chapter 1, Verse 11, where the Bible predicts, "That from the rising of the sun to the setting, a perfect sacrifice will be made." This is the Sacrifice of the Mass. There are Masses going on everyday. At every moment, there are Masses being said from the rising of the sun to the setting.

Let's talk about why we know that Christ is present in the Eucharist. First of all, we go to Christ, and we have to remember that Christ is both God and man. Christ is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who became man – so Christ is God and man. As God, He can do all things. Jesus walked on water. He raised people from the dead. He cleansed lepers and gave sight to the blind. He gave hearing to the deaf.

Christ claimed that He was God. He said, "The Father and I are One. He who has seen Me has seen the Father. Before Abraham was, I AM." Even Thomas the Apostle said, "My Lord and my God." That's important, because unless you believe that Christ is God, you won't believe in the Eucharist. We're going to go through this logically, why we believe that Christ is present in the Eucharist. First

of all, is that Jesus Christ is God and man. When Jesus worked miracles, they occurred. When He walked on the water, He truly worked these great miracles. As God, He created the world out of nothing. If that's the case, He can certainly change bread and wine into His Body and Blood.

In the Scriptures, we see miracles that the Lord worked, to prepare the minds and hearts of the Apostles for the gift of the Eucharist. The first one we should mention is the Wedding Feast of Cana. That's in John, Chapter 2. It says, "They ran out of wine at the wedding feast." What did they do? The Blessed Mother noticed first, and went to Jesus and said, "They have no more wine." Jesus said, "My hour has not yet come." The Blessed Mother said to the servants, "Go to Jesus and do whatever He tells you." Jesus said, "If my mom asks me, I will do it." He worked His first miracle, changing water into wine. This was a huge amount – about 120 to 180 gallons. He was a great person to invite to a wedding banquet! Jesus showed in that miracle, He had power over water, because He changed it into wine. This is important. I'm going to logically show you how the Eucharist is reasonable. In the Eucharist we believe Jesus changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood. He shows at Cana that He can change water into wine.

Another example of the miracles that Jesus did was the multiplication of the loaves and fish. All of you are all familiar with this, the loaves and fish; where Jesus could take five loaves and two fish, and He could feed 5,000 people. Therefore, Jesus showed he had power over bread, because He could feed 5,000 people with just a few loaves.

In another miracle, Jesus walked on the water. The fact that Jesus walked on the water shows He has power over His body, and that He's not limited in the way that we are, with our bodies.

We also know that Jesus rose from the dead. That's a very important point to remember too. Since Christ rose from the dead, He again had power over His body.

Therefore, in the Eucharist, Jesus has already shown us that He can change water into wine; He could multiply bread; He had power over wine; power over bread; power over His body. It makes sense that Jesus could change bread and wine into His Body and Blood.

It's also important to remember that when the Lord spoke, His words became reality. If Jesus was in the midst of a storm, he called out, "Be still," and the storm quieted. When Lazarus had been dead for four days, Jesus said, "Lazarus, arise!" And Lazarus came back from the dead, even though he was dead for four days. In fact, his sister Martha said, "By now Lord, he stinketh," because they felt that he was already decomposing. Jesus raised him from the dead. At the words of Christ, Lazarus arose. When He saw a crippled person, He could say "Walk,"

and the person could walk. When he cursed the fig tree, it would erupt. Therefore, at the Last Supper, when Jesus said the words, "This is My Body," notice that He doesn't say, "This represents," or, "This symbolizes," He says, "This is My Body." It became His Body. Remember, when the Lord speaks, it's like the old E. F. Hutton slogan, "When E. F. Hutton speaks, people listen"; when Jesus speaks, the material world listens. So, when He said, "This is My Body. This is the cup of My Blood," it became His Body and Blood.

Then, He gave this power to the Apostles when He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." He gave them the authority and power to change bread and wine into His Body and His Blood. This is when the priests were ordained, at the Last Supper.

Another thing to remember is that the Lord can be present, but in disguise. We know this in a couple of places in Scripture. After He rose from the dead, He was in the Garden, and Mary Magdalene thought He was the gardener. So, Jesus appeared as a gardener. On the way to Emmaus, the two Apostles thought they were walking along with a stranger, or some traveler. See, the Lord can be there, but He can be hidden under another appearance.

We know that in the Eucharist, Christ is there, but He comes to us under the appearances of bread and wine. Also, remember that after the Lord rose from the dead, His Body was glorified. He's not limited by the physical limitations that you and I have. For example, we could not walk through a locked door, but Christ could. In His glorified body, He could walk right through that locked door. If the Lord can walk through a locked door, and appear in the Upper Room, He can also become present under the appearances of bread and wine.

The miracles that Christ worked show that it is reasonable that the Eucharist is a reality. The Eucharist is "reasonable" – it makes sense. If Christ is God, if we believe in the miracles of the Bible, that Jesus multiplied loaves and fish, that Jesus changed water into wine, that He walked on the sea, that He rose from the dead, then, it's not unreasonable to hold that He can change the bread and wine into His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

When Christ came to Earth 2,000 years ago, He appeared as a baby – God became a little, tiny baby. When people look at the Baby Jesus in the manger, it wasn't all glowing, with light shining forth. He looked like a baby, and yet, He was God. That analogy holds true for the Eucharist. It looks like it's a piece of bread; it looks like wine. And yet, it is Christ. So, just as you needed faith, when you saw that little Baby Jesus, to say, "That little baby is the Son of God," so you need faith to believe that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ. It's the gift of faith.

All I can show you is that it makes sense. It's logical; it's not contrary to reason. If you believe in Christ, Jesus said, "This is My Body. This is the cup of My Blood."

If He didn't want us to believe, He would have said that, "This symbolizes My Body. This represents My Body," but He didn't. He says, "This is My Body."

The word that the Church uses to describe this miracle is *Transubstantiation*. "Trans" means "a change" (transatlantic airlines, takes you across, changes you from one place to another.) This is the word that means "the substance of the bread and wine becomes the substance of Christ's Body and Blood, while the appearances remain the same." "Transubstantia" means "substance," and "trans" is "a change in substance."

This is describing what happens at Mass. Since Christ ordained the Apostles, who in turn ordained the other priests, who in turn ordained every Catholic priest, like myself, can trace the ordination back to a Catholic Bishop, who was ordained by a previous Catholic Bishop, all the way back to Christ and the Apostles. Unfortunately, at the time of the Protestant Reformation, when they broke away from the Catholic Church, they lost that power and that ability to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. Therefore, they have a symbol of the Body and Blood of Christ. The Communion in the other churches is symbolic, because they lost that succession of Christ, all the way to the Apostles, to the priests today.

When you come to Mass, and the priest takes the bread and wine and says, "This is My Body; this is the Cup of My Blood," this change takes place, this great miracle, where the bread and wine become four things: the Body, the Blood, the Soul, and the Divinity of Christ. This is the complete and whole Christ. It's His glorified, resurrected Body. Remember that. That's why Jesus can become present under the appearances of the bread and wine, because it's His glorified Body. It's the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity – the complete Christ. If somebody just had a body without blood, they would not be a complete person. If it was just body and blood without the soul, it would be dead. The soul is there – Christ is living, present, and real, in the Blessed Sacrament. We call this the *Real Presence*. It's a real presence. It's not symbolic. It's not a reminder.

For example, I have pictures of my nieces and nephews in my wallet. Here's my driver's license showing Elvis Presley. If people don't like that one, I give them this one from Area 51, of the UFO guy. These are symbolic presences – the Elvis is not here; he's already left the building. This is a symbolic presence of Elvis. Pictures of my nieces and nephews – they're not physically here. It's not a real presence; it's a symbolic presence.

Christ is not present in the Eucharist in a symbolic way. The bread does not remind us of Jesus; it is Christ. The difference between having a symbolic presence and a real presence is the difference between having a photograph of somebody, and having the person really standing next to you. The person standing next to you, that's a real presence. All of you are really and truly present tonight. Let's say, if there was somebody who couldn't be here, but they sent

their 8x10" photograph in with somebody else, and I propped it up there, that person would be symbolically present here, but you would be really present here.

That's the difference between Catholic Communion and Protestant Communion. In the Catholic Church, it's the Real Presence of Christ. In the other churches, it's a symbolic presence of Christ, because they broke away and lost that power to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. That's a very important distinction. If it were a symbol, Jesus would have said, "This symbolizes My Body. This reminds you of My Body. This represents My Body." He doesn't do that.

There's a good analogy that might help make a little bit more sense. Let's say we took some bread and wine, and went down to a laboratory, and exposed it to radiation. That would not change the appearance. It would still look like bread, taste like bread, look like wine, and taste like wine. And yet, it would be dosed with radiation. It would become radioactive material, under the appearance of bread and wine. If you ate it, it would make you sick, but it wouldn't look any different.

If we can do that in the laboratory, why can't God do that on the altar? With the prayers invoking the Holy Spirit, the changing of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the words of consecration, the same thing happens. It becomes Christ, present under the appearances of bread and wine. In transubstantiation, the substance changes, but what's called the accidents, or the appearances, remain the same.

This is where the Church uses Aristotle, and St. Thomas Aquinas to help explain the Eucharist. In philosophy, there's substance, and there are accidents. Accidents don't mean a car accident; it's referring to appearances, like weight, shape, and texture. For example, this is a podium, made of wood. The accidents are that it's brown, and that it's hard. In the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine are changed into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ, but the appearances remain the same. It continues to look like bread, taste like bread, smell like bread, look like wine, and taste like wine. The appearances remain the same, but it's been changed; just like that radioactive substance still looks like bread and looks like wine, but it's been changed into radioactive material under the appearance of bread and wine.

If you ate that radioactive material, it would affect you. It's the same thing with the Eucharist, once it's been consecrated by a validly ordained Catholic priest. When you receive the Lord, you come closer to the Lord. It makes you holy, because you're receiving Christ Himself. It's the Lord's glorified, resurrected Body, under the appearances of bread and wine. It will continue to weigh the same amount, and taste the same way, and look the same way, with the same color. All those things, all the appearances remain the same, but the substance is changed. It's important to remember that after the Consecration, which are the words that

change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, there is no longer bread. There's no bread left. There's no bread whatsoever, and there is no wine – it has become Christ, but the appearances of bread and wine remain. So, the substance changes, but the accidents, or the appearances, are kept. You're receiving Christ under what looks like bread and what looks like wine. It's called an *Invisible Miracle*.

Christ showed that He could do all these things. He showed He had power over bread, had power over wine, and power over His Body. He showed that He can be present under a different appearance, such as to Mary Magdalene in the Garden, to the Apostles on the way to Emmaus, and that the Lord can take any shape or appearance He wants. He could walk through doors into the Upper Room. So, He can certainly become present on the altar at every Mass.

(A question). Do they have valid Eucharist, with the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, in the Protestant Churches? Remember, at the time of the Protestant Revolt, when they broke away from the Church, they changed their priesthood to becoming a minister, so you don't call them priests, you call them ministers. What happened was that the Apostolic Succession, from Christ to the Apostles, down to the present, was broken. With the Presbyterians, the Lutherans, and Methodists, it's very clear that they changed their Mass from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, to a Communion Service. They no longer ordained their priests validly, with a validly ordained Catholic Bishop that could trace his ordination back to the Apostles. When that happened, they lost that power to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

In the 1800's, what happened was, the Church examined the priesthood in the other denominations, especially the Anglican, or the Episcopalian, to see if it was valid. The Church said no, because when they had broken away, they lost that, and it was not a valid Holy Orders. What happened was, some of the Bishops of the Anglican Church, about 100 years ago, went and found schismatic Catholic Bishops that were validly ordained, and they got reconsecrated, to make sure that they did have Apostolic Succession. Therefore, we can say that there are a small percentage of Anglican or Episcopalian priests who do have valid Holy Orders. That would just be a small percentage. So, if you go to any of those churches, you would have to find out from one of the priests who ordained them, and who ordained them, all the way back, to see if they were validly ordained.

One of the saints we should mention is St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, also called Mother Seton. There's a high school in Manassas named after her, Seton High School. Mother Seton was born in 1774 up in New York, to a wealthy Episcopalian family. She converted to the Catholic Faith because of the Eucharist. She wanted to make sure she had Christ in the Eucharist. She was married and had five children. Her husband died when she was only 29 years of age. She had to raise the children by herself. When she became Catholic, she lost her entire family; she lost her friends. She and her children became Catholic,

but they were rejected and abandoned by their family, for leaving their own religion and becoming Catholic. Mother Seton, before she was Catholic, when she would sit in her own Episcopalian Church, would look out the window during the service, and look over at the Catholic Church and the steeple. She was praying to Christ in the tabernacle in the Catholic Church, and felt such a draw to become Catholic.

She did become Catholic, and then she was a wife, she was a mother, she was a widow, and then she became a nun. She established the first order of women in the Catholic Church, in the United States, the American Sisters of Charity. January 4<sup>th</sup> is her feast day. Mother Seton is buried up in Emmitsburg, Maryland. If you ever go to Emmitsburg, where I went to the seminary, there's a shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. I recommend you take a look and visit her church. Most saints are buried over in Europe. It's amazing that we actually have a canonized saint buried about an hour and a half from here.

January 5<sup>th</sup> is the feast day of St. John Neumann of Philadelphia, who was the fourth Bishop of Philadelphia. He's buried, and you can see him in a glass case in Philadelphia, at 5<sup>th</sup> and Gerard. If you go up to Philly, definitely visit that beautiful church.

I wanted to mention a few other places in Scripture that you can look to in the Bible to find out about the Eucharist. The most important one is John, Chapter 6. If you ever see my car driving down Linton Hall Road, it will say "JN CH6." I've had people say, "What does that mean, Father?" I tell them, "John, Chapter 6." In John, Chapter 6, the Lord tells the crowds, "Unless you eat My Body, and drink My Blood, you have no life within you." That really shocked people, because the idea of eating the Body and drinking the Blood of Christ just did not sit well with the people. And so, He repeated that again. I would encourage you to read John, Chapter 6, when you go home tonight. It will take you about ten minutes.

Three times, Jesus kept repeating, "My Flesh is real food. My Blood is real drink. Unless you eat My Body and drink My Blood, you have no life within you. Those who eat My Body and drink My Blood, I will raise up on the Last Day. For My Flesh is real food, and My Blood is real drink." Three times, the Lord kept telling them. What happened was that He lost all of His followers after that talk, except for the Twelve Apostles. Before this, the Lord had hundreds of followers. They all walked away when they heard about this teaching about the Eucharist.

Some people say that maybe Jesus was just speaking symbolically, or maybe He was speaking figuratively, or maybe it meant to accept Him into your heart. We know that's not the case, because Jesus would not have let all of His hundreds of followers walk away with a misunderstanding. In other places, when people had a question, Jesus would always correct them. For example, three chapters before, in John, Chapter 3, He talked to Nicodemus, and He said, "Unless you are born again, of water and the Holy Spirit, you cannot enter the Kingdom of

Heaven.” Nicodemus said, “What do You mean? How can I climb back into my mother’s womb and be born over again?” Jesus said, “No, I’m not talking about physical rebirth; I’m talking about being born again by Baptism of water and the Holy Spirit – spiritual birth.” So, Jesus corrected the misunderstanding, and said, “No. Be born again of water and the Holy Spirit.”

Then, in another passage, the Apostles were on the boat, and Jesus said, “Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees.” The Apostles thought that Jesus was getting on their case for not bringing enough bread. Jesus said, “No, I don’t mean physical bread.” He said, “The yeast of the Pharisees is their evil plots.” When people misunderstood Him, He corrected them.

In John, Chapter 6, when they said, “How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?” Jesus again repeated the same thing three times. If the Lord wanted them to take it symbolically or figuratively, He would have straightened it out. Therefore, we know that the Lord, because He was willing to lose hundreds of people over this teaching, was not willing to compromise or to water down this teaching. Everybody left Him, except for the Twelve Apostles. Jesus even said to them, “Are you going to leave Me as well?” Then they said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life.”

It’s also interesting to note that the expression in the Bible, in the Old Testament, to “eat bread” or “drink blood” symbolically meant “to persecute somebody.” There are many references in the Bible about that. Did all of you get this handout, called “The Holy Eucharist”? It’s a very good pamphlet. I would encourage you to read it, because, for example, look at the middle panel, at the very bottom. It says, “In the Aramaic language that our Lord spoke, to symbolically eat the flesh or drink the blood of someone meant to persecute them or assault them.” Look at Psalm 27, or Isaiah 9, Isaiah 49, Micah 3, Second Samuel 23, or Revelations 17. Thus, if Jesus were only speaking symbolically about eating His Flesh or drinking His Blood, as some people say, then what He really meant was, “Whoever persecutes and assaults Me will have eternal life,” which of course makes nonsense of the passage. Therefore, if Jesus wasn’t speaking symbolically, which of course He wasn’t, because that would be ridiculous, Jesus saying, “Unless you persecute Me and assault Me, you cannot enter Heaven.” Therefore, we have to take it literally, which means, “Unless you eat My Flesh and drink My Blood, you have no life within you.”

The other passage you should look up in your Bible is First Corinthians, Chapter 10, and Chapter 11. These are passages where St. Paul says that, “He who eats and drinks unworthily of the Body and the Blood, eats and drinks damnation upon himself.” This is an important topic, about who should receive Communion in the Catholic Church. The Church teaches that only baptized Catholics should receive Communion. And not just baptized Catholics, but the Catholic has to:

- Be baptized.
- Be a Catholic.

- Be in the state of grace. That means they cannot be aware of any mortal sin. If somebody is aware of a mortal sin, they have to go to Confession first before they receive Communion.
- Believe in the Real Presence. They can't just say, "It's a symbol. I can go to Communion."
- If married, be in a marriage recognized by the Catholic Church, either having taken place in the Catholic Church, or have been validated or blessed by the Catholic Church.
- Fast one hour before Communion. This means that one hour before Communion, you don't eat anything or drink anything except for water, or medication. This means, let's say, that if you go to the 11:00 AM Mass on Sunday, Communion would be around 11:40, so you want to stop eating at 10:40. Not one hour before Mass, but one hour before Communion. So, chewing gum would not be right. That would break the Eucharistic fast.
- Accept and live by Church teachings – accept all the teachings of the Catholic Church. A lot of Catholics really don't know about this condition. For example, if you have somebody who's a practicing homosexual living with a partner, they cannot go to Communion, if they're having immoral relations. If somebody's living in adultery, they can't go to Communion. There are just certain things that you have to do to receive Communion, which means that there are a lot of Catholics out there that should not be going to Holy Communion in the Catholic Church.

(Note: the first side of the tape ended at this point. It resumes below).

Sacrilegious. This is found again in First Corinthians, Chapter 10, and Chapter 11, where St. Paul says, "He who eats and drinks the Body and Blood unworthily eats and drinks damnation or condemnation upon themselves." If it were just a symbol, then anybody could go to Communion, and invite anybody up – people that are unbaptized, or not Christian, or whoever. But, if it's the Body and Blood of Christ, then these conditions have to be met. The Catholic Church isn't saying, "Only Catholics can go to Communion, and no Protestants can go to Communion." It's really saying that not even every Catholic should go to Communion, unless they're in the state of grace, and believe in the Real Presence, and have a Catholic marriage, have fasted one hour, and accept Church teachings. The thing to remember is the word Communion means "union with." To accept and receive Holy Communion in the Catholic Church means you have to accept the teachings of the Catholic Church. You accept the Pope; you accept the Blessed Mother; you accept all the teachings of the Catholic Church.

That's why Catholics are not allowed to receive Communion in Protestant Churches, because Catholics do not believe what Protestants believe, and Protestants don't believe what Catholics believe. To make it clear, Catholics should not be going to Communion in Protestant Churches, because when you go to Communion, you're stating, "I believe in all the teachings of that Church."

Unless you believe all the teachings of Martin Luther, or John Calvin, or Zwingli, or John Knox, or John Wesley, you shouldn't go to Communion in the Methodist, or Protestant Churches. If you believe that, then go ahead; but a Catholic is not supposed to go to Communion in Protestant Churches, or Protestants go to Communion in Catholic Churches.

The exception would be, in danger of death, or let's say if somebody's dying in a hospital, or I've had it where somebody becomes Catholic on their death bed, and they want to receive Communion. So, I bring them into the Church, and they go to Communion. Or, in some cases, like a prison, there are certain exceptions, where a Bishop could allow a non-Catholic Christian to receive Holy Communion, even as a Protestant. There are some exceptions, and there are some conditions. They do have to be baptized Christians; they have to be in the state of grace, believe in the Real Presence, and there has to be some special need, like a danger of death, or imprisonment or something, and the Bishop would have to give them special permission. But it can happen, and there are some times where a non-Catholic Christian is allowed to receive Communion in the Catholic Church. You can go online and get the Church documents for that. There are guidelines that do allow that.

(A question). In 1983, the new Code of Canon Law came out. Before 1983, a Catholic could only go to Communion once a day at the most. But in 1983, the new Code of Canon Law said that if you go to two Masses, you're allowed to receive Communion twice in one day. Let's say, if you went to Mass at 9:00 in the morning, and then went to a wedding, and they had Communion, you could take Communion at both of those Masses. Or, if you went to a funeral, you could take Communion at that. Now, you're allowed to receive twice in one day.

I should also mention that with Communion, even if you only receive Christ under the appearance of bread, you still receive the complete and total Christ. Let's say you're going to Communion, and the priest is starting to run out of consecrated Hosts. He could break that Host in half and give you Communion. Even if you received half the Host, you would still receive the complete Jesus: Body, Soul, Blood, and Divinity. Let's say he ran out of Hosts completely, but he still had some of the Precious Blood (the consecrated wine) in the chalice. You could take a sip of that, and you would still receive the complete and total Christ. Keep in mind, that sometimes at Mass we can run out, but even if I broke the Eucharist into one fourths, one sixteenths, or one thirty-seconds and gave you a little tiny particle, you still receive the complete Jesus: Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

A good analogy is that if you have a mirror this size, you can see your reflection in it, but if you smash the mirror, and picked up the little, tiniest piece, you could still see your reflection in that. So, Christ is still present, even in the smallest particle. That's why we are very careful, and we have the altar boys hold the paten underneath people's chin, so that if the Host falls, or a particle falls, it falls on the paten, because even the smallest particle is Christ.

The Council of Trent talked about that – that even the smallest fragment is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. That's why we go to such great pains to make sure that none of the particles is lost, and they're all consumed.

(A question). The Church does allow receiving in the hand. The hosts that they make now are made of wheat, flour, and water. We're not allowed to use yeast, leaven, sugar, honey, or anything like that in the Communion. The Communion hosts that are made now are made by the nuns in different convents. They sell the large bags of hosts, and that's how they make their money to keep going. In the hosts that they make now, like the ones we use, usually the particles don't break off, because they're made in such a way, they try not to be very crumbly. That being said, that's why I always prefer people to receive on the tongue. That way, they won't have to worry about particles falling onto their hand. If they receive on the tongue, that's been the traditional way of receiving. The nice thing about that is you don't have to worry about particles breaking off in your hand.

Mother Teresa was really against receiving Communion in the hand. She thought people would get nonchalant about it, and walk up just like they're going to a movie theatre and going up to buy popcorn. Especially with the kids, a lot of people go to Communion that don't know how to receive. Before Easter, we'll have a class where we show people how to receive Communion, and what is the proper way. If somebody does receive on the hand, then they're responsible to make sure that they do check their hands, and to make sure there are no particles or crumbs. If they did see any, they would have to consume them.

I think it would be very important, for all of you to consider when you do receive Communion, to consider receiving Communion in the traditional way. When the priests says, "The Body of Christ," you say, "Amen," which is a Hebrew word that means "I believe," or "So be it." People are allowed to receive in the hand, but they should do it properly, and they do need to check their hands for particles. That's my own personal preference (people receiving on the tongue), but they are allowed to receive in the hand. We'll go through that later when we have a full class to practice receiving Holy Communion.

(A question). Just to give you the short answer, Christ only died once. He offers Himself once to the Father. The Mass makes that Sacrifice present to us. An analogy could be that the Super Bowl is played one Sunday, but if you then taped it, and showed it every subsequent Sunday, it's still only one game, but it's made present in people's homes. The Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is made present at every Mass. It's the one and only Sacrifice, but we get to participate in it by coming to Mass.

In the last couple of minutes, let's draw your attention to this handout. These are Eucharistic miracles. There's a whole book about Eucharistic miracles. If you go to Europe, you'll find perhaps, maybe 100 Eucharistic miracles there, and in

other parts of the world. I've had the privilege of going to Siena, Italy, and actually seeing this one miracle with my own eyes. What happened was, in the year 1740, a thief broke into the Catholic Church, broke open the tabernacle, stole the Hosts, dumped the Hosts in the poor box, and took the gold ciborium, or container. Eventually, they found these Hosts, and this poor box was one of those that was only opened once a year, and it was filled with dust and cobwebs. They could not consume those Hosts. They put them back in another ciborium, put them in the tabernacle, and just waited for them to disintegrate, and to dissolve over the course of time.

You see, Christ is present in Holy Communion as long as the appearances of bread and wine remain. Therefore, if you dropped a Host on the floor, you could dissolve it in water, and once it's dissolved, and once it breaks down, then Christ is no longer present. When you receive Communion, Christ is present within you for about 15 minutes. That's how long it takes for the body to break down the appearances of bread or the appearances of wine. You can receive Communion, and you become a living tabernacle for about 15 minutes. So, Christ is present within you.

They figured that with these Hosts (there were 50 of them), that in time, they would just disintegrate. What happened was one year went by; five years went by; finally, 100 years went by. Here it is, 250 years later, and the Hosts have never disintegrated. They're still as fresh as they were on the day that they were consecrated. I've actually been within two feet of these Hosts. They're in a beautiful, clear glass receptacle. Some of the Popes have received Communion from these Hosts. You would expect them to be stale, but here it is, 250 years later, and some Bishops and Popes have received these Communion, received Jesus; and it's still as fresh as it was 250 years ago. That's a great miracle.

On the back is another miracle, of Lanciano, Italy. You can read what happened, way back, over 1,200 years ago. A priest doubted that the bread and wine became the Body and Blood of Christ. And, right before his eyes, it changed into the Flesh and Blood of Christ. This was then kept. You can actually go to Lanciano and see this. It's kept in this large monstrance. Up here is the Sacred Host, and down here, the Blood that was coagulated, and formed into little sections. In 1970, the Church did allow scientific tests to be done on this. You can read the results. It turned out to be it was true human flesh and blood. The heart tissue was type AB, and it's amazing that this has survived all these years without disintegrating.

We should have, of course, great respect and reverence for Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament. That's why, when we come into Mass, we should always *genuflect*. "Genu" means "knee," and "flect" means "to bend knee." We genuflect on one knee, and we adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Before we receive Communion, the Church encourages us to make a bow. You might see people

come up for Communion, and they bow, and then they receive Communion. Again, we'll go through the actual practicalities of that closer to Easter.

After Mass, the Consecrated Hosts are then placed in the tabernacle, and the tabernacle is kept locked. Christ remains present in the tabernacle of every Catholic Church. When you go into a Catholic Church, you can actually go visit, and spend time in prayer before the tabernacle. He wants to remain with us in the Church.

The Eucharist is really God's great love for us. Jesus became one of us, by becoming a little baby, growing up, and dying on the Cross. But He then even humbles Himself even more by becoming our spiritual food. Isn't that amazing? Bishop Sheen would use the example, if you really loved your dog so much, that you were willing to become a dog, to spend time with your dog. That's great love, isn't it? But, if you did that, you would have to give up being able to communicate, and use the computer, and type, and all those things. You would have to bark instead of talk. You would have to eat dog food instead of human food.

Us becoming a dog is not nearly as big a change as God becoming man, which was amazing – God became man, just like one of you. So, God couldn't communicate in the way He could before. He had to use words. He had to tell us stories. He had to work miracles. He had to eat. He had to sleep. He had to drink.

But imagine you loved your dog so much, you wanted to nourish your dog. So you said, "I'm going to become Alpo. I'm going to become dog biscuits," so that you can nourish the dog. That's great love, isn't it? That you would become the food for your dog. That's what Jesus does for us. He becomes our food, the food for us.

He becomes our spiritual food. It is amazing. When we receive Communion, we become holy, because we become more like Christ. You are what you eat. The more we receive Christ in the Eucharist, the more we become like Him. What a wonderful sacrament this is, the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Most people become Catholic for this reason, for the Eucharist, because they want to receive Christ. As Protestants, they love Christ. They read the Bible, but that's like reading the menu. Receiving the Eucharist is like ordering the meal, and being able to participate in the banquet and the feast. Most people, when you ask them why they became Catholic, say it's because of the Eucharist, the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

This is the crowning jewel of the Catholic Faith. Despite all the other wonderful things we have in the Church, like Confession, which is such a great thing, or Confirmation, or all these other things, the greatest is Christ Himself, and the

Eucharist is the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the greatest blessing of becoming a Catholic, is receiving the Lord in Communion.