

Presence – Session 1 – God is with us

Video Outline

1. Martyrs & heroes of the Eucharist

- a. St. Philip Neri parish, New York, 1912
- b. St. Tarcisius, Roman Empire, AD 275
- c. St. Edmund Campion, England, 1581
- d. Young girl, China, 1900
- e. St. Clare, Assisi, Italy, 1224

2. What do Catholics believe?

- a. The Eucharist is one of the seven sacraments of the church
 - i. A sacrament is a channel of grace established by Christ to convey his divine life.
 - ii. Bread & wine become the Body, Blood, Soul & Divinity of Jesus Christ fully present.
- b. Transubstantiation
 - i. “trans” – to change
 - ii. “substance” – the essence of something; what it really is
 - iii. The outward appearance remains that of bread & wine, but the substance is changed into Jesus’ Body & Blood
- c. Humble outward signs of bread & wine point to the supernatural reality of spiritual nourishment.

3. God is with His people.

- a. Meals are about sharing relationships with other people.
- b. God is love (see 1 John 4:8). He created us out of love in order to invite us into the communion of the Trinity.
- c. God’s presence in the Old Testament foreshadows the Eucharist
 - i. God’s revelation of his name at the burning bush – “I am” – communicates not just God’s existence, but his presence with his people.
 - ii. The refrain of God’s covenants with his people is “I will be your God, and you will be my people” (for ex. see Exodus 6:7).
- d. The incarnation is the culmination of God’s plan to be with his people.
- e. Jesus established the Eucharist to remain present with us.
 - i. At the Last Supper Jesus changed bread & wine into his Body & Blood, and then he told the Apostles to continue to do what he had just done.
 - ii. God gives himself to us in the Eucharist not only to give us strength for our journey, but also to accompany us at every moment on the journey.

“The greatest love story of all time is contained in a tiny white host.” - Venerable Fulton Sheen

Names for the Eucharist

The Eucharist is so important that the Church has many different names for it.

Each name illuminates a different facet of the sacrament.

- **Eucharist** – from the Greek word for “thanksgiving” - it is the perfect act of giving thanks to God.
- **The Lord’s Supper** –Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper. It points forward to the heavenly wedding feast of the Lamb.
- **The Breaking of Bread** - Jesus broke bread at the first Eucharist at the Last Supper. It was by this action that his disciples at Emmaus recognized him. This was the name given to the sacrament by the 1st Christians (ex. Acts 2:42).
- **The Eucharistic Assembly** – The sacrament is celebrated amid the faithful gathered together.
- **The Memorial of the Lord’s Passion & Resurrection & The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass** – It makes Jesus’ sacrifice on the Cross present to us and invites us as the priestly people to make a sacrificial offering of ourselves with Christ to the Father.
- **The Holy and Divine Liturgy and The Sacred Mysteries** – It is the center of the Church’s whole liturgy and a participation in the heavenly liturgy.
- **The Most Blessed Sacrament** – It is the “Sacrament of sacraments” (CCC 1330).
- **Holy Communion** – It is by this sacrament that we are intimately united to Christ.
- **Holy Mass** – (Latin missa) – The liturgy ends by sending forth the faithful to live out God’s will in the world.

Homework

- How have you experienced God’s presence in your life?
- Read Exodus 3:2-15 slowly & prayerfully. What stands out to you in this passage?
- Read Ezekiel 37:26-27 & Matthew 28:20 slowly & prayerfully.
 - How can this presence of Christ in the Eucharist be a source of strength and consolation as you journey through your life?
 - In what ways can you grow in appreciating and embracing Christ’s presence in the Eucharist?

For further study: CCC 1077-134, 1333-44, 1373-81, 1996-2005

Presence – Session 2 – The Story of the Eucharist

Video Outline

1. John 6 – Bread of Life Discourse

- a. Jesus' explicit teaching on the Eucharist
- b. Many followers leave Jesus over this teaching
- c. This teaching is so central to his mission that he lets them go

2. The Story of Scripture

- a. God's plan is for Adam and Eve to become one with him by eating from the Tree of Life
- b. Adam and Eve sever their communion with God through a meal
- c. When Adam and Eve sin, they turn away from the presence of God
- d. God promises a savior to overcome the obstacle of sin
- e. The whole Old Testament leads up to the sacrifice of the Cross

3. The Last Supper

- a. Jesus uses the traditional Passover meal to institute the Eucharist
- b. Applies sacrificial language to himself – he is the new Passover Lamb
- c. We participate in his sacrifice by receiving his Body and Blood in the Eucharist

4. Road to Emmaus

- a. First day of the week – new creation
 - i. A test in a garden
 - ii. Jesus is the New Adam
 - iii. The Cross is the new Tree of Life, and the Eucharist is its fruit
- b. When we partake of the fruit of the Tree of Life, our eyes are opened to behold God

Homework

- Why do you receive the Eucharist? What do you hope for or expect this sacrament to accomplish in you?
- Read Revelation 22:1-5, 14, 17 slowly & prayerfully. What stands out to you in this passage?
- Read about the fruits of the Eucharist in CCC 1391-97. With which fruit(s) are you most familiar? Which one do you feel you need the most at this time in your life? Spend some time in prayer, asking our Lord especially for this fruit the next time you receive the Eucharist.

For further study: CCC 1333-44, 1362-72, 1391-1401

Presence – Session 3 – Bread for the Journey

Video Outline

1. Food for the journey

- a. God gives the Israelites manna for their journey in the wilderness
- b. The Eucharist sustains us on our spiritual journey
- c. The Eucharist is a foretaste of Heaven
 - i. We receive Christ, who is our ultimate goal
 - ii. We are brought into communion with God and with everyone else who is in communion with God
 - iii. In the Mass, we worship God together with all the angels and saints in Heaven

2. The Mass

- a. Liturgy of the Word
 - i. We encounter God in Scripture
 - ii. We respond in faith through the Creed and the Prayers of the Faithful
- b. Liturgy of the Eucharist
 - i. The sacrifice of Jesus is made present in the Eucharist
 - ii. The climax of the liturgy is when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion
- c. Story of Emmaus
 - i. Liturgy of the Word – Jesus interprets the Scriptures for the disciples
 - ii. Liturgy of the Eucharist – Jesus takes, blesses, breaks, and gives the bread
- d. In the Mass, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Death, & the Resurrection of Jesus are made present

3. Rules for receiving the Eucharist

- a. Never receive the Eucharist in a state of mortal sin (see 1Cor 11:27-29)
- b. Fast from food and drink (except water or medicine) for at least one hour before receiving
- c. Receive at least once a year

4. Our participation in Mass

- a. Colossians 1:24 – we participate in Christ's sacrifice
- b. Intentionally giving ourselves back to God when we receive the Eucharist
- c. The Eucharist is our offering of thanksgiving to God

5. Eucharistic adoration

- a. "I look at Jesus, and Jesus looks at me"
- b. Jesus is present in every Tabernacle, waiting for us

6. Sent forth

- a. *Ite, Missa est* – we are sent out from Mass with a purpose
- b. The world needs us to share what we have received

Homework

- Read Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15 slowly & prayerfully. Imagine that you are one of the Israelites. How do you feel at the beginning of the story? How do you feel when God sends the manna??
- Read Wisdom 16:20-21 slowly & prayerfully. What stands out to you in this passage? How does it apply to the Eucharist even more than to the manna?
- Read CCC 1524 slowly & prayerfully. Spend some time in prayer, thanking God for the gift of the Eucharist, and Him to help you grow in your love for this sacrament.

***For further study: CCC 817-22, 1140-44, 1345-55, 1359-61,
1373-81, 1384-90, 1422-84, 1524-25, 1854-64, 2041-43, 2180-83***

Presence – Session 4 – Biblical Foundations for the Eucharist

Video Outline – Part 1

1. Introduction

- a. Objections to the doctrine of the Real Presence
- b. Value of considering objections

2. Four groups of objectors

- a. Jewish
- b. Pagan
- c. Protestant Reformation
- d. Secularist

3. Jewish and Pagan Objections

- a. Jewish difficulties, looking at John 6
 - i. In calling himself the Bread from Heaven, Jesus is making a claim to be divine
 - ii. Jesus's insistence on eating his Flesh shows he is the new Passover Lamb, essential to participation in the new Covenant
 - iii. Jesus's insistence on drinking his Blood is contrary to the Old law
 - iv. Reason for difference: is in the blood
- b. Pagan difficulties
 - i. Evidence that the early Church really believed in the True Presence
 - ii. Problem: Cannibalism
 - iii. Response: not cannibalism, but communion with the living flesh of Christ.

Video Outline – Part 2

1. Historical background for Protestant objections

- a. Luther did not deny, although his teaching was different from the Catholic understanding of transubstantiation
- b. Others like Zwingli and Calvin did deny the Real Presence

2. Scriptural background: John 6

- a. "What if you were to see the son of man ascending ..." a defense of his divinity
 - i. "It is the Spirit that gives life. The flesh is of no avail."
 - ii. In verse 66, many disciples leave

3. Protestant Interpretation and Catholic Responses

- a. "Flesh is of no avail" = no Real Presence, just a metaphor
 - i. Disregards Christ's repeated statements
 - ii. Christ's words related to the soul and eternal life, distinct from earthly bread
 - iii. Christ's actions show he is speaking literally
 - iv. He does not call disciples back (after verse 66)
 - v. Belief in Eucharist rests on belief in Christ's divinity
 - vi. Actual metaphorical statements are different from Bread of Life statements.

- b. St. Paul evidence (1 Corinthians 11)
 - i. A tradition handed on by the Lord himself
 - 1. New Covenant in blood
 - 2. Real covenant has real blood; if it were simply metaphorical blood, then it would just be a metaphorical covenant
 - ii. Paul's warning against eating and drinking unworthily
 - 1. A profanation deserving judgment
 - 2. Evidence of divine wrath
 - 3. Paul takes the Real Presence seriously, so does the Church
- c. Additional Pauline evidence
 - i. "Cup of blessing is a participation in the blood ..."
 - ii. Those who eat the sacrifice are partners in the altar
 - iii. Participation and partners related to word *koinonia*
 - iv. Church being the Body of Christ depends on the Real Presence

Video Outline – Part 3

1. Secular Objections

- a. You really believe that God is present?
 - i. Seems insane
 - ii. Post-enlightenment: everything must be explained by reason or it's not true
 - iii. Excludes all faith

2. Response: faith is not contrary to reason, but goes above and beyond reason

- a. Key Christian belief of the Eucharist stands with the incarnation and Resurrection
- b. It's rational and reasonable to say God changes bread and wine into his Body and Blood, but it does take faith
- c. Some truths do go beyond the comprehension of our reason; faith is necessary to have life

3. "Unless you eat the flesh ... you have no life in you."

- a. Genesis: Tree of Life
- b. Revelation, promises to those who conquer
 - i. 2:7 – promise to eat of the Tree of Life
 - ii. 2:17 – promise of the hidden manna
 - iii. 3:20 – promise to come in and eat
 - iv. Climax in Revelation 19 – Wedding Feast of the Lamb
 - v. Also climax of John's writings
- c. Conclusion: Faith in the Eucharist is reasonable
 - i. Consistency of Scripture evidence of its divine origin
 - ii. Evidence of Scripture points to centrality of the Real Presence in the Eucharist

For further study: CCC 1333 - 1344, 1384-90, 1400