

Gospel of St. John 6:51-58 - The Eucharist

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I walked into the St. Anthony Center on Friday and noticed a poster on a bulletin board. It caught my attention. It said the **Top Ten Reasons to be a Roman Catholic**. Here are some of my favorites:

10. It's politically incorrect.
(You can annoy the Catholic bashers)
9. You can sing badly, and no one cares.
(9 out of 10 American Catholics are musically impaired)
8. You can impress your friends.
(Tell them you belong to a militant international institution)
3. Confession
(No, it's not fun, but what a deal)
2. Dependability.
(Jesus founded Our Church on Peter, the Rock, and promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against it.)

#1. The Eucharist!

"He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood will have eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For My Flesh is real food and My Blood is real drink. He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood lives in Me and I in him."
John 6:54-56.

This is today's Gospel

We have been preparing for this Gospel of John for 4 weeks, by covering the "Bread of Life" discourse. The Manna from Heaven, the multiplication of loaves, etc. Today - it's like Christmas. We even receive gifts. The Greatest Gift in the whole universe; the greatest gift of all time. If God could give us a better gift, He would, but He can't; because God has given us Himself.

Next week's Gospel continues the discourse and says that many disciples left and went home because this teaching was too hard. The Apostles stayed and said to Jesus, "you have the Words of Eternal Life."

We agree with the Apostles. But others still walk away.

Why do they still walk away, and what do they believe?

For example: a Baptist relative. Believes every word in the bible is true, period.

He believes every word so literally that he believes that Creation only lasted 144 hours because the Bible says creation was six days, 6 - 24 hour days.

When I read this Gospel to him and asked what he thought about this. He said, "*Jesus didn't mean it.*"

Why wouldn't someone not want to believe it; why not desire a gift that is so great? What are they afraid of?

If someone died and left them ten million dollars and they hire lawyers to prove the person was insane.

Other Christians believe something else:

Jesus is spiritually present, etc.

Jesus is sort of present.

Jesus may be present along with the bread and wine.

Either way, when the service is over, the remnants are thrown away.

What do we believe?

We believe that the Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We use golden patens to collect even the smallest fragments. I usually find 6 - 8 on a weekend Mass. We have detailed procedures for cleansing and purifying sacred vessels and cloths.

In the Eucharist, we receive the Living Body and Blood of Our Savior.

We don't receive a piece of Jesus, We receive the 2nd Person of the Holy Trinity

We also don't receive our own personal Jesus.

We all receive the same entire 2nd Person of the Blessed Trinity.

There is One Eucharist and we all receive Him together.

It's as if we all have the same heart beating in our chest.

How close should we all be to one another? How close are we?

When we receive the Eucharist, we are in FULL Communion with

Our Lord, Our Creator and Our Savior

We are in **FULL Communion** with one another.

We receive the Eucharist; we don't receive Holy Communion, we should already be in Holy Communion with Jesus and with each other.

We are in full Communion with all Catholics everywhere.

We are in Communion with Our Most Blessed Mother, with all the saints in heaven, canonized Saints and all our own family saints.

In a few minutes during the Offertory, when you see the bread and wine carried up the aisle past you, throw yourselves into the cruet of wine and the ciborium of hosts.

"This bread and wine are the work of your hands." It took many grains of wheat and many grapes from many plants and many hands and many processes to make them

However, all the ingredients, the soil, the water, the sun and the oxygen were given to us by God

The bread and wine represent us. They represent our cooperation with God in our lives and in nature.

At the Altar, through the words and actions of the priest, Jesus blesses them. And,

During the Consecration, we are present at the Last Supper, and Jesus, through the priest, changes the bread and wine **and us** into His own Body and Blood.

But before we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, Jesus goes to the cross and He is held high by the priest or by the priest and deacon. And as the priests prays, "Through Him, with Him and in Him..."

Jesus says to the Father, "**Forgive them, for they know not what they do.**"

Then He looks at His Mother and says, "**Behold, these are you children.**" Then again to the Father, He raises His eyes and says, "**Father, it is finished.**" They are saved, and Jesus lowers His head and dies.

Jesus doesn't die again, He only died once, but we are present on Calvary at that time.

Jesus is then lowered from the cross and placed back onto the Altar.

We, then, pray together the prayer that Our Lord, Himself taught us, the "Our Father." We ask for our "daily bread" and promise to forgive one another.

Jesus Christ appears, as He did in the Upper Room on Easter Sunday Evening and says, "Peace be with You.!" After which we wish each other "Peace."

We come forward to receive the Holy Eucharist,

we don't just receive a blessing, a good feeling, a symbol of God's presence.

The effect is real, **We Receive Christ and it is dramatic!**

It is immediate, It is intimate,

It is physical. It is the physical penetration of our person by the very Person of Jesus Christ.

It is God's True gift of self, **Himself**

A gift that we all share together in Communion with each other.

When we receive the Eucharist, Jesus is physically present in us.

His blood courses through our veins.

His blood flows through our hearts.

He can feel our heartbeat, He can feel our Love

We can feel His pulse and we can feel His Love as He touches our hearts.

What do we experience? Do we feel this as we receive the Holy Eucharist?

That's not all. The Eucharist is a foreshadowing of the heavenly wedding feast in heaven.

Jesus is the bridegroom and we, the Mystical Body, the Church, are the bride.

As we know, No wedding or marriage is complete until the marriage is consummated.

Love demands union (that is the nature of Love, self-donation)

God is Pure Love. The Greater the Love - the Greater the Union.

Love is the total donation of one's self to another, for the other's sake - total abandonment,

The bride and groom become one flesh by the **total self-donation of each one to the other.**

The Eucharist at this Mass is not **only a foreshadowing** of the Great Marriage Feast in Heaven or the just means to that end.

Our reception of the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ in the Eucharist in this Mass IS THE END ITSELF.

For, in this Eucharist, today, our Lord totally donates Himself to us, the members of His Church, and we become one with Him. We are Joined with Him at the Heart.

The Problem is that we just can't fathom the Reality of this Union with Christ in this life.

We are the Body of Christ!

In the Eucharist today, and everyday,

And, there is One Lord - **LOVING HIMSELF.**

AND, YES, YES, YES, OUR LORD DOES MEAN WHAT HE SAYS...

Now, let us turn our full attention and participation to the Mystery of this Eucharistic Sacrifice and as St. Peter said to Jesus on the Mount of the Transfiguration, **"Lord, it is good to be here!"**