



Presence: Physical vs. Virtual

Social Media Posts

"Blessed are those who dwell in your house! They never cease to praise you." -
Psalm 84

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be...And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth." -John 1:1-14

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion.

"We too are gathered round the table of the Lord, the table of the Eucharistic sacrifice, in which he once again gives us his Body and makes present the one sacrifice of the Cross. It is in listening to his word, in nourishing ourselves with his Body and his Blood that he moves us on from being a multitude to being a community, from anonymity to communion. The Eucharist is the sacrament of communion that brings us out of individualism so that we may follow him together, living out our faith in him." -Pope Francis

Just as the term 'Church' refers to the living temple, God's People, the term 'church' also has been used to describe "the building in which the Christian community gathers to hear the word of God, to pray together, to receive the sacraments, and celebrate the eucharist.

The church building is both the house of God on earth (*domus Dei*) and a house fit for the prayers of the saints (*domus ecclesiae*). Such a house of prayer must be expressive of the presence of God and suited for the celebration of the sacrifice of Christ, as well as reflective of the community that celebrates there.

Churches are never 'simply gathering spaces but signify and make visible the Church living in a particular place, the dwelling of God' among us, now reconciled and united in Christ. As such, the building itself becomes a sign of the pilgrim Church on earth and reflects the Church dwelling in heaven.

Every church building is a gathering place for the assembly, a resting place, a place of encounter with God, as well as a point of departure on the Church's unfinished journey toward the reign of God.

"Almighty ever-living God, pour out your grace upon this place and extend the gift of your help to all who call upon you, that the power of your word and of the Sacraments may strengthen here the hearts of all the faithful." -Collect Prayer, Mass for the Dedication of a Church

"For you have made the whole world a temple of your glory, that your name might everywhere be extolled, yet you allow us to consecrate to you apt places for the divine mysteries. And so, we dedicate joyfully to your majesty this house of prayer, built by human labor. Here is foreshadowed the mystery of the true Temple, here is prefigured the heavenly Jerusalem." -Preface, Mass for the Dedication of a Church

Bulletin Articles

Face Time

Anyone who has spent significant time away from loved ones knows that connecting through a video call just isn't the same. We want to touch them, hear the nuances in their voice, linger in their physical presence. Similarly, and more importantly, viewing Mass on television or via social media just isn't the same as participating in person. While at times watching Mass is the only option available to us due to illness or other serious circumstances, it is good for us to remember that Jesus came to us in human form - in flesh and blood - so that we could more fully grasp the great love that God has for humanity. When we gather together at the celebration of the Eucharist, we hear God's word, feel the presence of Christ with one another, touch and taste the very Body and Blood of the Lord.

Where 2 or 3 Are Gathered

Jesus said, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mt 18:20) This is especially true when we come together at Mass. In the celebration of the Eucharist, we experience Christ's presence together, are formed in word and sacrament, receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion, and are sent forth in Christ's mission of mercy, forgiveness, and compassion. In the Eucharist, we realize the true identity of the Church as the Body of Christ. In the Eucharist, we grow in communion with our Lord and one another, assured that Christ is with us.

The Word Became Flesh

We often only think about the Incarnation - God coming to us in human form in Jesus - at Christmas time. Yet, the Incarnation is significant all the time. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." God understands our human experience and communicates to us through physical realities. In the sacraments, Christ's presence is made known to us through the stuff of the earth - water, bread, wine, oil - and these are experienced through our senses - touch, taste, smell. We must be physically present at Mass and in other sacramental celebrations in order to fully encounter Christ's presence.

Become What You Are

In speaking about the Eucharist, St. Augustine said, "Believe what you see, see what you believe and become what you are: the Body of Christ." In sacramental Communion, we receive Christ's real presence, Christ's Body and Blood. While the graces received by participating at Mass are not solely received through sacramental Communion, the more perfect means of participating in the Eucharist include receiving Holy Communion when properly disposed. Our reception of sacramental Communion nourishes and strengthens us so that we may become more fully who we are as baptized Christians: members of Christ's Body.