

IMPACT

Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.

Real presence

One of the greatest mysteries of our Catholic faith is that Christ is truly, really present in the Eucharist. During consecration, the ordinary elements of bread and wine are transformed into the extraordinary - the very Body and Blood of our Lord. And with this great mystery, we recognize another: as the gifts are brought forth, we bring our very lives to the altar, asking God to consecrate them, to make us holy. In receiving Holy Communion - Christ's Body and Blood - the ordinary stuff of our lives is to be transformed, as we become more fully members of Christ's Body.

Through participation in the Eucharist, we are given all we need in Christ's gift of presence with and for us. We are drawn into communion with the Lord, who knows our needs, desires, hopes, and dreams, and who feeds us, body and soul, nourishing us to live as Christ's people in our daily lives.

As Eucharistic people, we are called to give in turn, as stewards of all we are and have and will be. "Here people enjoy a unique union with Christ and, in him, with one another. Here his love -- indeed his very self -- flows into his disciples and, through them and their practice of stewardship, to the entire human race." (SDR, 34)

It doesn't end with the final blessing. We are sent out in Christ's mission of love. Through his passion and death, Jesus sacrificed all for us. In communion with Christ, we are called into communion with one another. We are to see the needs of others, especially the most vulnerable, and are called to act - to sacrifice, to go out of our selves in service, ministry, and care. Without cost we have received; without cost, we are to give.



"The love of Christ can permeate all of our relationships: with our families, our friends, and our neighbors. It can also reshape the life of our society as a whole. Our relationship with Christ is not restricted to the private sphere; it is not for ourselves alone. The very solidarity or communion in Christ's self-giving love that makes the Church and makes us members of the Church orders us beyond the visible community of faith to all human beings, whom we are to love with that very same love that forms our communion with the Lord."

(The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church, 21)



Communion of love

The salvation offered in the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ is nothing less than sharing in the very life of God, the communion of love among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There is no greater gift that God could possibly give us. In Christ, we are sharers in the divine nature (2 Pt 1:4). The Church Fathers referred to this participation in the divine life as "divinization." The eternal Son of God made this possible by becoming man and uniting humanity to his divine Person. St. Augustine explained, "the maker of man was made man, so that man might be a receiver of God." In fact, Pope Francis reminds us that "in the bread of the Eucharist, 'creation is projected toward divinization, towards the holy wedding feast, towards unification with the Creator himself'".

The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church, 9

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

We begin and end prayer with the Sign of the Cross, but have you ever thought of the sign itself as a prayer?

The Sign of the Cross invites us into an encounter with God's love, protection, mercy, forgiveness and presence. Through this briefest of prayers, we recall the key mysteries of our faith: that we are created in love and for love by God the Father; we are redeemed through Jesus Christ, whose passion, death, and resurrection lead us to the fullness of life; and we are filled with the Holy Spirit, whose presence empowers us to live as God desires. These three persons are one God, whose love is overflowing, everlasting, abundant beyond our comprehension.

The Sign of the Cross is a sign of our faith, whether prayed privately in personal prayer or publicly, before meals, at Mass, with friends. The next time you make the Sign of the Cross, make a renewed commitment to live as a child of God, disciple of Jesus Christ, as one who is anointed and sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Impact this month

This month, the Church in the United States also begins a Eucharistic revival, which invites each of us to appreciate more deeply the gift and call of the Eucharist. This month, commit yourself to more deeply:

Make Sunday a priority, ordering your life so that God is first above all things.

Prepare for Mass by reflecting on the Sunday readings.

Fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist, focusing your heart and mind on the prayers, readings, homily, and liturgical actions of the Mass.

Reflect on your experience of the Eucharist.

Discern your call as a member of Christ's body.

Act as one who is nourished and formed by the Eucharist.

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.