

Understanding the Eucharist

Class Proposal
By Mauricio I. Perez

Archdiocese of Seattle

2005 Year of the Eucharist



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Justification

- ✚ Over 50% of the Catholics in the United States do not believe in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. An important factor to this crisis can be the large number of Catholics of a Protestant background who were converted. Another important factor can be the lack of knowledge and understanding of the theological principles of the Most Blessed Sacrament. A course of the nature of the one proposed here can help to mitigate this second factor, at least within the scope of our parish, by increasing the knowledge of the faithful on the Eucharist, and by discovering its spiritual richness, which will fortify their faith.
- ✚ Every parish shall comply with the *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, which describes the Catechesis for Receiving the Body and Blood of the Lord, in its paragraph 25:

When Communion under both kinds is first introduced by the diocesan bishop and also whenever the opportunity for instruction is present, the faithful should be properly catechized on the following matters in the light of the teaching and directives of the *General Instruction*:

- a. the ecclesial nature of the Eucharist as the common possession of the whole Church;
- b. the Eucharist as the memorial of Christ's sacrifice, his death and resurrection, and as the sacred banquet;
- c. the real presence of Christ in the Eucharistic elements, whole and entire--in each element of consecrated bread and wine (the doctrine of concomitance);
- d. the kinds of reverence due at all times to the sacrament, whether within the Eucharistic Liturgy or outside the celebration; and
- e. the role that ordinary and, if necessary, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are assigned in the Eucharistic assembly

The course proposed here will fulfill all these areas of catechesis required in the norms, helping the parish to comply with the Norms.

- ✚ The same Norms in its paragraph 28, establish that:




Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and

practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence.


Currently, the majority of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are trained by a video and a short session on the practice of the distribution of Communion. The class proposed here will help the parish to fulfill the true preparation requirement, and will help the extraordinary ministers to understand their *munus*, its dignity, and the high religious, moral, and spiritual responsibility it implies.

Audience



Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

-  The parish can fulfill the obligation of providing extraordinary ministers with a solid instruction in the theology, spirituality, and practice of the sacrament, in accordance to the guidelines of the Catholic Church.
-  Will gain a deep knowledge of the most holy sacrament, becoming aware in consequence of the big responsibility of giving communion to others.
-  Will understand the reasons behind the rubrics that permit them to do certain things, and prevent them from doing some others.



Catechists

-  By getting a deeper knowledge of the sacrament of Eucharist, catechists will be able to provide a richer formation to their students.

All the faithful

-  Will increase their knowledge in the sacrament. By understanding the principles of its theology, their faith will be strengthened. By understanding the spiritual gifts of the sacrament, their need for the sacrament will increase, and their spirituality will be fortified.
-  Will be up to date with the current Eucharistic pastoral of our Pope, by studying and understanding the encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.

Catechumens and neophytes

-  Students of RCIA and neophytes will better understand one of the crucial points of discordance with other Christian churches: the real presence in the Eucharist.
-  Will understand how our current liturgy has its roots in the community founded by Jesus, strengthening their decision to join the truly one, catholic, and apostolic church.



Method

- ✚ Six sessions of 1.5 hours (preferably 2 hours with a 10 minute break).
- ✚ Homework after each class.
 - Reading of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.
 - Questionnaire on the encyclical.
 - Questionnaire about the class presented.
- ✚ Final exam on a seventh session for people interested in a diploma (strongly suggested as a requirement for Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion). This will be a participation diploma only (not a certificate), but it can be a good incentive for people to persevere and to be rewarded for their effort.

Grading (suggested)

- ✚ Attendance to a minimum of 5 classes and a minimum final score of 70 points in order to get a diploma.
- ✚ Maximum possible grade: 100 points (60 points for homework and 40 points for final test) awarded the following way:
- ✚ Six homeworks worth 10 points each.
 - 5 questions on the topic presented => 5 points.
 - 5 questions on the encyclical => 5 points.
- ✚ 1 final test worth 40 points.

Materials

- ✚ 1 classroom.
- ✚ One copy of the *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* encyclical for each student.
- ✚ 1 projector to present slide decks from a laptop (laptop is provided by the teacher).
- ✚ 1 copy of the book “When We Eat this Bread” authored by the teacher. A copy of the book will be provided to the Parish free of charge. The Parish will make copies of the book for the students, and will determine if they will be charged for them. Any money collected from the books would be solely for the Parish or its office of faith formation.

Prerequisites

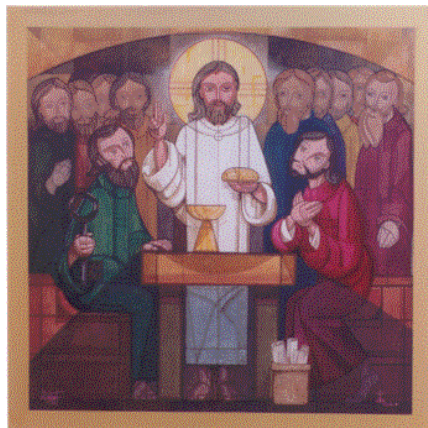
- ✚ In order to ensure enough *quorum* for the class, and to be able to plan ahead and get the appropriate materials, the class shall be advertised in the mass four weeks before the class begins. Pre-registration is strongly suggested, and can be made with the teacher after one of the Sunday masses, or by phone at the Faith Education Office.

✚ Advertising suggested:

- A poster advertising the class
- An advertisement in the bulletin
- Mention of the class during the announcements before the final blessing in all Sunday masses.

Cost

- ✚ Being an apostolate, the teacher will not charge any fee to the Parish for the teaching of this class. Even when this class is free, college level presentations and a top quality work are guaranteed.
- ✚ The Parish may charge any fee to the students, if it is considered appropriate. The use of all money collected will be determined by the Parish or its Office of Faith Formation. A nominal fee charged to the students to recover the cost of copies of the book and binders, is suggested.



Course Contents

- ✚ History of the Sacrament
- ✚ The Eucharist in the Scripture
- ✚ Theology of the Eucharist
- ✚ The Liturgical Celebration of the Eucharist
- ✚ Rubrics and Canons
- ✚ Spirituality from the Eucharist

Lesson 1. History of the Sacrament

Cognitive Objective: The student will learn the meaning of the Christian banquet, and its evolution along the History of Salvation.

Formative Objective: The student will be aware of his participation in the History of Salvation by participating on the Holy Mass and taking communion.

1. Anthropology of the banquet.
 - Hermeneutics of gathering and communion.
2. The Passover meal.
3. The Institution of the Eucharist.
 - The Lord's Supper
4. The breaking of the bread in the primitive Christian communities.
5. The Council of Trent.
 - Its definition of the Sacrament.
2. The Vatican Council II.

Homework:

1. Questionnaire on the History of the Sacrament
2. Reading of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.
 - ⇒ Introduction
 - ⇒ Chapter 1. "The Mystery of Faith"
 - ⇒ Questionnaire

Lesson 2. Theology of the Eucharist

Cognitive Objective: The student will learn the theological principles of the Eucharist.

Formative Objective: The student will acknowledge the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, and will become aware and participate of the *koinonia*.

1. The Eucharist in the economy of Salvation.
2. Bread and Wine
 - a. Hermeneutics of the symbols along the Scripture.
 - b. The bread and the wine as sacramental signs.
3. The Bread of Life.
 - a. Analysis of Jn 6.
4. The Real Presence
 - a. The presence of Christ by the power of his word and the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Transubstantiation.
5. The *koinonia*.

Homework:

- ⇒ Liturgical practice
 - ⇒ Identify the *koinonia* in next Sunday Mass and write a brief reflection.
- ⇒ Reading of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.
 - ⇒ Chapter 2. “The Eucharist Builds the Church”
 - ⇒ Questionnaire

Lesson 3. The Eucharist in the Scripture

Cognitive Objective: The student will learn the scripturistic foundation of the Eucharist.
Formative Objective: The student will be able to give to make a true anamnesis by making present the reality of the sacrament on every mass, and will be aware of the true meaning of the Real Presence extending its scope from the personal level to the community level.

1. The Antiochean Source
 - a. Lk 22
 - b. 1 Cor 11
2. The Palestinian Source
 - a. Mt 26
 - b. Mk 14
3. The Lavatory.
4. The Lord’s Supper
 - a. A meal.
 - b. A meal in community.
 - c. A farewell banquet.
 - d. A festive banquet.
 - e. A covenant banquet.
 - f. A Paschal banquet.
 - g. A thanksgiving banquet.
 - h. A sacrificial banquet.
 - i. A messianic and eschatological banquet.
 - j. A banquet for being renewed.

Homework:

- ⇒ Liturgical practice
 - ⇒ Identify the different fashions of the banquet in next Sunday’s Mass and answer questionnaire
- ⇒ Reading of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.
 - ⇒ Chapter 3. “The Apostolicity of the Eucharist and of the Church”
 - ⇒ Questionnaire

Lesson 4. The Liturgical Celebration of the Eucharist

Cognitive Objective: The student will learn the order and the meaning of each part of the Eucharistic Liturgy.

Formative Objective: The student will achieve a more active participation in the liturgy, by being aware of its development and meaning.

1. The Mass of all ages.
2. The Sacramental Sacrifice
 - a. Thanksgiving
 - b. Memorial
 - c. Presence
3. The Order of the Mass
 - a. Gathering.
 - b. Liturgy of the Word.
 - c. Presentation of the offerings.
 - d. Collection.
 - e. Anaphora.
 - f. Preface.
 - g. Epiclesis.
 - h. The institution narrative.
 - i. Anamnesis.
 - j. The intercessions.
 - k. Communion.

Homework:

- ⇒ Liturgical practice.
- ⇒ Identify each part of the order of the Mass in next Sunday's Mass.
- ⇒ Reading of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.
- ⇒ Chapter 4. "The Eucharist and Ecclesial Communion"
- ⇒ Questionnaire

Lesson 5: Rubrics and Cannons

Cognitive Objective: The student will learn the rubrics and canons of the Eucharist, and will be able to distinguish between a valid celebration and a licit celebration.

Formative Objective: The student will become aware of the importance of celebrating the sacrament in accordance to the Church rubrics and canons, by appreciating the value of its liturgical tradition.

1. Overview of the General Instruction on the Roman Missal.
2. Overview of the Canon Law.
3. The Minister of the Eucharist.

- a. The CIC.
- b. The GIRM.
4. The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.
 - a. Definition of *extraordinary ministry*.
 - i. Not a right.
 - ii. Not everyone is entitled. Impediments.
 - iii. Only in case of real liturgical need.
 - b. Duties and obligations.
5. Canons on the Eucharist (CIC).
6. Rubrics for the Eucharist (GIRM).
7. Local provisions and indulgences for the Catholic Church in the United States approved by the Congregation of Cult and Divine Worship. Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America

Homework:

- ⇒ Liturgical practice.
 - ⇒ Pay attention to next Sunday’s mass and identify any possible violation to the rubrics. Was it relevant? Why?
- ⇒ Questionnaire on the Rubrics and Canons
- ⇒ Reading of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.
 - ⇒ Chapter 5. “The Dignity of the Eucharistic Celebration”
 - ⇒ Questionnaire

Lesson 6. Spirituality of the Eucharist

Cognitive Objective: The student will learn the value of Eucharist by making an exegesis of the Road to Emmaus. The student will learn the fruits of Holy Communion.

Formative Objective: The student will value the Eucharist as bread for the soul, and will be nurtured in plenitude when taking communion.

1. The disciples in Emmaus.
 - a. Discovering the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.
 - b. The joy of taking communion.
 - c. The need of taking communion.
2. The fruits of Holy Communion.

Homework:

- ⇒ Questionnaire on the Spirituality of the Eucharist
- ⇒ Reading of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.
 - ⇒ Chapter 6. “At the School of Mary ‘Woman of the Eucharist’”
 - ⇒ Questionnaire

May this class be for the glory of God and the health of God’s people.