

USCCB - November 2021



The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church



Origin of the Document

- Developed by the USCCB's Committee on Doctrine
 - Theology of the Eucharist
 - Focus on Eucharistic doctrine
- Approved by the full body of the USCCB at its November 2021 General Meeting



SOURCES

- Sacred Scripture -- 27 references
- Catechism of the Catholic Church -- 16 references
- Pope Francis -- 14 references
- Pope St. John Paul II -- 13 references
- Vatican Council II -- 9 references
- Church Fathers -- 9 references
- Saints -- 9 references
- Canon Law -- 9 references
- Pope Benedict XVI -- 8 references
- Roman Missal -- 8 references
- Misc. Documents -- 5 references
- Pope St. Paul VI -- 2 references





Background Concerns

- Understanding of Eucharistic sacrifice and Real Presence
- Relationship between personal and communal dimensions of Eucharistic belief and practice
- Affect on moral transformation both personal and public
- Worthy reception of Holy Communion
- Sunday obligation and liturgical participation





Introduction: Context
and Purpose



Part I: The Gift

- The Sacrifice of Christ
- The Real Presence
- Communion with Christ
and the Church



Part II: Our Response

- Thanksgiving and
Worship
- Transformation
in Christ
- Conversion
- Food for the
Journey

Outline



Sent Forth
-- Missionary Disciples
Conclusion

Outline



Document: 59 paragraphs
Introduction: 7 paragraphs
Part I: 21 paragraphs
Part II: 27 paragraphs
Sent Forth: 2 paragraphs
Conclusion: 2 paragraphs



Context
-- Evolving
Content
-- Our Eucharistic
tradition
Consequence
-- Application



Highlights: Context

COVID-19 Pandemic

- Christ remains present with us.
- Physical distance and virtual Mass
 - Response of the Faithful:
 - + Deeper hunger for Eucharist
 - + Discouraged or accustomed to life without the Eucharist



Highlights: Purpose

- "...no document can exhaust the mystery of the gift of the Eucharist."
 - Reflect on aspects "that are relevant to contemporary issues and challenges"
 - Focus on Christ's gift of himself in the Eucharist and our response
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Highlights: The Gift

- Christ glorifies the Father "by bringing us salvation."
 - Salvation "is nothing less than sharing the very life of God."
 - Participation in divine life is the "divinization" of the human person.
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Highlights: The Gift

- Affirms the real presence of Christ as "the most profound reality of the sacrament."
 - "Substantial" = "the totality of the gift he offers to us"
 - Variety of ways by which we acknowledge the Real Presence
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Highlights: The Gift

- Holy Communion = "Christ giving himself to us"
- Deepens our communion with the Holy Trinity and with one another
- All sacraments are "ordered toward Eucharistic communion."
- Sunday obligation = "not the mere observance of a rule but the fulfillment of our identity"



Highlights: Response

- Eucharist = "thanksgiving"
 - Importance of "full, conscious, and active participation"
 - Responsibility of bishops and priests to celebrate reverently, to prayerfully understand the liturgical books, and to "be faithful to the texts and rubrics"
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Highlights: Response

- "...personal and moral transformation ... is sustained by the Eucharist..."
 - "...not restricted to the private sphere..."
 - Those "who exercise some form of public authority have a special responsibility..."
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Highlights: Response

- Responsibility to address all life issues and the dignity of each person
 - Recognition then that we are called to repentance and conversion
 - Exposition on venial and mortal sin, "the medicinal character of the Eucharist," and potential rupturing of ecclesial communion
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Highlights: Response

- Proper disposition for the worthy reception of Holy Communion
 - Relationship between the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance/Reconciliation
 - Witness of the lives and teachings of the saints and blessed, particular attention to young people
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Highlights: Sent Forth

-- Evangelization "is a task that belongs to every member of the Church..."

-- "Missionary disciples"

-- Action arises from the discovery of God's love for us through Christ and the desire to lead others to that same discovery.

"We have offered these reflections on the Eucharistic faith and practice of the Church as a starting point. ... Let us all ask the Lord to call us into a time of Eucharistic renewal, a time of prayer and reflection, of acts of charity and sincere repentance. The Lord is with us in the Eucharistic Mystery..."



Conclusion



Application

- Personal reflection
- Catechesis, preaching, and formation
- Consideration of Eucharistic beliefs that may not be fully understood or accepted by the Faithful
- Emphasized in Eucharistic practice