

A Eucharistic Way of Life

**Eucharist is the way of life for Christians.
Our eucharistic partaking of the Body of Christ
transforms and nourishes us
so that we might in turn live as *body of Christ*.**

Your Experience

1. How does weekly Mass help me live as a Christian?

What Vatican II says

Moreover, by the sacraments, especially holy Eucharist, that charity toward God and [neighbour] which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), No. 33.

For all their works, prayers and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, their daily occupations, their physical and mental relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even the hardships of life, if patiently borne—all these become "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ". (see 1Pet 2, 5) Together with the offering of the Lord's body, they are most fittingly offered in the celebration of the Eucharist. Thus, as those everywhere who adore in holy activity, the laity consecrate the world itself to God.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), No. 34.

In her very early days, the holy Church added the agape [ie. practice of love/charity See 1 Cor 13] to the eucharistic supper and thus showed itself to be wholly united around Christ by the bond of charity. So, too, in every era it is recognized by this sign of love, and while it rejoices in the undertakings of others, it claims works of charity as its own inalienable duty and right. For this reason, pity for the needy and the sick and works of charity and mutual aid intended to relieve human needs of every kind are held in highest honor by the Church.

Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (Apostolicam Actuositatem) No. 8

What the Catechism Says

"Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvellously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit maybe produced in them. For all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit - indeed even the hardships of life if patiently born - all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God, everywhere offering worship by the holiness of their lives." (CCC, No. 901)

Your Experience

1. What kinds of tasks, prayers or concerns can I unite with the Eucharist each day?
2. What are the relationships, concerns, prayers that I can offer with next Sunday's Eucharist?

Further Reading

Pope John Paul II

To his sacrifice Christ unites the sacrifice of the Church: "In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer and work, are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1368). The truth that the whole community shares in Christ's sacrifice is especially evident in the Sunday gathering, which makes it possible to bring to the altar the week that has passed, with all its human burdens.

Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, No. 43.

Receiving the Bread of Life, the disciples of Christ ready themselves to undertake with the strength of the Risen Lord and his Spirit *the tasks which await them in their ordinary life*. For the faithful who have understood the meaning of what they have done, the Eucharistic celebration does not stop at the church door.

Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, No. 45.

The seeds of disunity, which daily experience shows to be so deeply rooted in humanity as a result of sin, are countered by *the unifying power* of the body of Christ. The Eucharist, precisely by building up the Church, creates human community.

Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, No. 24.

Every commitment to holiness, every activity aimed at carrying out the Church's mission, every work of pastoral planning, must draw the strength it needs from the Eucharistic mystery and in turn be directed to that mystery as its culmination.

Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, No. 60.

Lived in this way, not only the Sunday Eucharist but the whole of Sunday becomes a great school of charity, justice and peace. The presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of his people becomes an undertaking of solidarity, a compelling force for inner renewal, an inspiration to change the structures of sin in which individuals, communities and at times entire peoples are entangled.

Far from being an escape, the Christian Sunday is a "prophecy" inscribed on time itself, a prophecy obliging the faithful to follow in the footsteps of the One who came "to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to captives and new sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (*Lk 4:18-19*). In the Sunday commemoration of Easter, believers learn from Christ, and remembering his promise: "I leave you peace, my peace I give you" (*Jn 14:27*), they become in their turn *builders of peace*.

Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* 72-73.

The Eucharist is an event and programme of true brother [and sister]hood. From the Sunday Mass there flows a tide of charity destined to spread into the whole life of the faithful, beginning by inspiring the very way in which they live the rest of Sunday. If Sunday is a day of joy, Christians should declare by their actual behaviour that we cannot be happy "on our own". They look around to find people who may need their help. It may be that in their neighbourhood or among those they know there are sick people, elderly people, children or immigrants who precisely on Sundays feel more keenly their isolation, needs and suffering. It is true that commitment to these people cannot be restricted to occasional Sunday gestures. But presuming a

wider sense of commitment, why not make the Lord's Day a more intense time of sharing, encouraging all the inventiveness of which Christian charity is capable? Inviting to a meal people who are alone, visiting the sick, providing food for needy families, spending a few hours in voluntary work and acts of solidarity: these would certainly be ways of bringing into people's lives the love of Christ received at the Eucharistic table.

Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, No. 72.

With the offering of the Sunday Eucharist, the Church crowns the witness which her children strive to offer every day of the week by proclaiming the Gospel and practising charity in the world of work and in all the many tasks of life; thus she shows forth more plainly her identity "as a sacrament, or sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the entire human race."

Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, No. 30

Receiving the Bread of Life, the disciples of Christ ready themselves to undertake with the strength of the Risen Lord and his Spirit *the tasks which await them in their ordinary life*. For the faithful who have understood the meaning of what they have done, the Eucharistic celebration does not stop at the church door. Like the first witnesses of the Resurrection, Christians who gather each Sunday to experience and proclaim the presence of the Risen Lord are called *to evangelize and bear witness* in their daily lives.

Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* No. 45

If it is the Word that gathers the community, it is the Eucharist that makes it one body: "because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor 10: 17). The Church, therefore, is not the result of an aggregation of individuals but of unity among those who are nourished by the one Word of God and the one Bread of Life. Communion and the unity of the Church that are born of the Eucharist, are a reality of which we must be ever more aware, also in receiving Holy Communion, ever more aware that we are entering into unity with Christ and thus become one among ourselves. We must learn ever anew to preserve and defend this unity from the rivalry, disputes, and jealousies that can be kindled in and among ecclesial communities.

Pope Benedict XVI, Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome on the Theme: "Church Membership and Pastoral Co-Responsibility." Tuesday May 26, 2009.

Praying Your Experience

You have been reflecting on what it means to live a eucharistic life.

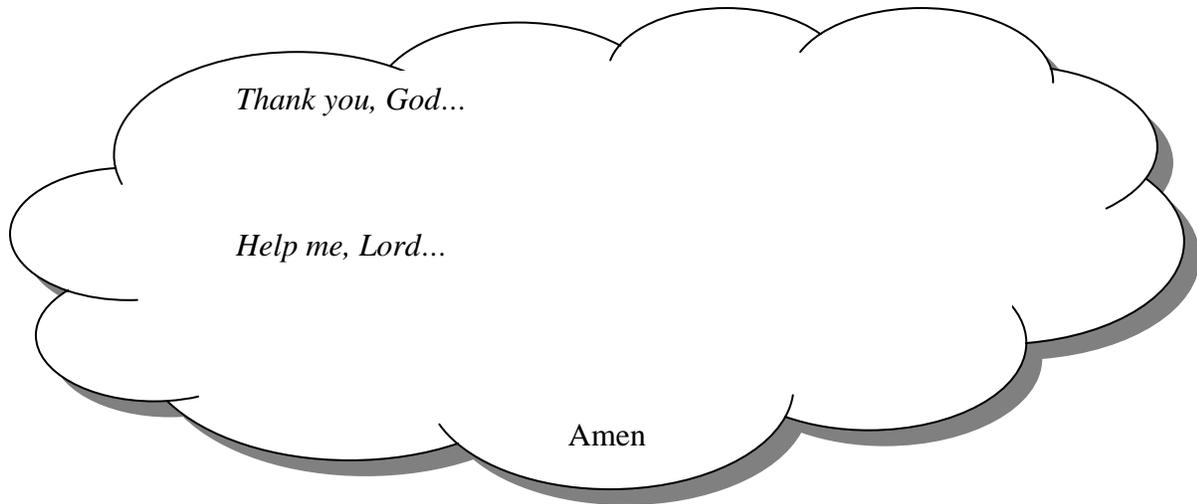
Please use the space below to bring to God what is in your heart.

Some areas to consider:

your hopes...

your needs...

dreams, fears, pain, thanksgiving...



Integrating Activity

Design an image or poem/write down a word or phrase
that reflects your feelings and aspirations
as you ponder your life in Christ as Eucharist for others.

