
First Eucharist

Eucharist

Eucharist comes from the Greek eucharistia, meaning thanksgiving. Ever since Pentecost, when the Church, the People of God, began building a church, they were sustained with the spiritual food in times of trial and in time of celebration. Eucharist is that food, the real presence of the risen Lord. The Second Vatican Council, in its Constitution on the Church, rightly proclaimed that the eucharistic sacrifice is "the source and summit of the Christian life."

The Eucharist is, for Catholics, both a meal and a sacrifice. The Lord gave us the Eucharist at the Last Supper because he wanted us to share in the life of the Trinity, the loving communion of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We become united to God at our baptism, and receive a further outpouring of the Holy Spirit at our confirmation. In the Eucharist we are nourished spiritually, brought closer to God, again and again: "By eating the Body and drinking the Blood of Christ in the Eucharist we become united to the person of Christ through his humanity," write the bishops. They remind us of the words of Jesus in John's Gospel: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him" (Jn 6:56).

The move also has meaning for the rest of us. We smile at the children in their first Communion finery-not just because they look cute, but because they are joining us at our family table, too: the table of God's family.

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A toddler's move from high chair to the family table is a momentous event. A seat at the table acclaims a new status: big boy or big girl. The move to the table brings new privileges. There, a child can share fully in the family meal, even the icky vegetables, and in the table conversation. The move also brings new responsibilities. The little one must have table manners, get involved in the meal prayer, and perhaps help set or clear the table.

First Communion is just such a momentous move. A child, baptized as an infant into the family of God we call Church, at last takes a place at the Lord's table with the grownups. Grandparents, aunts and friends join the youngster's immediate family in celebrating the event.

First Eucharist at Holy Family School

Children who attend Holy Family School prepare for first Eucharist during through the first and second grade religion curriculum. The second grade teacher does the immediate preparation including a day time retreat, and a special dinner. The dinner includes the child's parents. First Eucharist is celebrated during the Easter Season at a special Eucharistic Celebration on a Saturday Morning.

First Eucharist at Holy Family Religious Education

Children who attend Holy Family Religious Education prepare for two years. Classes are held once a week on Wednesday afternoons, or Sunday mornings. The first Eucharist catechists plan a special retreat day for all the children and their families just before first Eucharist. First Eucharist is celebrated during the Easter season at a special eucharistic celebration on a Saturday morning.

Celebrations at Sunday Eucharist

The Sunday following first Eucharist, the children are encouraged to attend the 9:30 a.m. Mass dressed in their first Eucharist dresses and suits. Just before the Eucharist Prayer the priest presider invites all the children to join him around the altar.