

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ - Lectionary: 169

Reading I - [Genesis 14:18-20](#)

In those days, Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine, and being a priest of God Most High, he blessed Abram with these words: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, the creator of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who delivered your foes into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Responsorial Psalm - [Psalm 110:1, 2, 3, 4](#) R (4b) You are a priest forever, in the line of Melchizedek.

Reading II - [1 Corinthians 11:23-26](#)

Brothers and sisters: I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

Gospel - [Luke 9:11b-17](#)

Jesus spoke to the crowds about the kingdom of God, and he healed those who needed to be cured. As the day was drawing to a close, the Twelve approached him and said, "Dismiss the crowd so that they can go to the surrounding villages and farms and find lodging and provisions; for we are in a deserted place here." He said to them, "Give them some food yourselves." They replied, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have, unless we ourselves go and buy food for all these people." Now the men there numbered about five thousand. Then he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty." They did so and made them all sit down. Then taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. They all ate and were satisfied. And when the leftover fragments were picked up, they filled twelve wicker baskets.

Christ the Priest & Good Shepherd feeds his Sheep

“True worship must be rooted in the great dogmas of the faith, which reveal both who God is and who we are in his presence.”¹

The Mass, our Eucharistic Celebration, the Holy Sacrifice, the memorial offering, is meant to be and can be a joy filled transcendent experience. It is meant to be and can be transformative of our hearts, conforming them to the heart of Christ. Many aspects of our celebration work together for a transcendent and transformative experience, but, what is most essential is the real presence of the body, blood, soul, and divinity of the Christ, Son of God. The Eucharist is literally the substance of Christ who is the new and everlasting covenant effecting our union, and it is through the Eucharist that Christ communicates to us the Divine Life, His Divine nature. The Body and Blood of Christ that we receive in Holy Communion, whose presence we adore here in the Tabernacle is our guaranteed source of grace and strength from God for the supernatural gifts of faith, hope, and charity. The Eucharist is *“the source and summit of the Christian life.”*

CCC 1324

God is glorified and man is sanctified in the Eucharistic Liturgy. The Church, beloved bride of Christ calls to her Lord and through Him offers worship to the eternal Father ... [worship] which participates in the liturgy of heaven. ^{CCC 1089} This Eucharistic Liturgy is an “action” of the whole Christ ... Those who even now celebrate it without signs are already in the heavenly liturgy. ^{CCC 1136} “In the earthly liturgy we share in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle”²

The celebration of Mass, as the action of Christ the Priest and of the People of God is the center of the whole of Christian life. To experience awe and wonder during Mass we need something more than our five physical senses. We need to experience the Mass with the help of the supernatural gifts of faith, hope, and charity.³ We give to God simple bread and wine and through the ministry of the actions of the priest, Jesus takes these gifts, blesses them, and transforms them into his very self, his real presence, body, blood, soul and divinity. The good shepherd feeds his sheep.

Not only do we offer the gifts of bread and wine, but we also offer ourselves, asking to be conformed to Christ and be transformed by Him—to be made one by the Holy Spirit. Saint Paul writes in 1 Corinthians that when we are united to Christ we become *“one spirit with him”* ^{1 Cor. 6:17}. Pope Benedict said *“the difference between the action of Christ and our own action is done away with. There is only one action, which is at the same time his and ours—ours because we have become ‘one body and one spirit’ with him. The uniqueness of the Eucharistic liturgy lies precisely in the fact that God himself is acting and that we are drawn into that action of God. Everything else is, therefore, secondary.”*

Reading and singing, standing and kneeling, processions and incense, bowing and giving the sign of peace all have a place at Mass. Yet, they are secondary. They must arise from the more fundamental desire for and action of giving ourselves to Christ and allowing ourselves to be transformed through that act of humble obedience and submission. It is essential that we surrender ourselves to the action of God not only for our own salvation but for that of the whole world. Our transformation in the Eucharist is to bear fruit in the transformation of the world.⁴

¹ When Worship Becomes Theater, First Things 6/19/25 [CARL R. TRUEMAN](#)

² *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 8; cf. *Lumen Gentium* 50

³ Regis J. Flaherty, [Discovering the “Awe” of the Mass](#), Faith Basics (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2012), 5.

⁴ Regis J. Flaherty, [Discovering the “Awe” of the Mass](#), Faith Basics (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2012), 39–42.

“It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that the celebration of the Mass be so ordered that the sacred ministers and the faithful taking part in it, according to the state proper to each, may draw from it more abundantly those fruits, to obtain which, Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his Body and Blood and entrusted it as the memorial [offering] of his Passion and Resurrection to the Church, his beloved Bride.”^{GIRM 17}

“The entire celebration is arranged in such a way that [is intended] to lead to a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful, namely in body and in mind, a participation fervent with faith, hope, and charity, of the sort which is desired by the Church and which is required by the very nature of the celebration and to which the Christian people have a right and duty in virtue of their Baptism.”^{GIRM 18} *“Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb”*. Empty ritual? Archaic tradition? Not at all. All the prayers and rituals of the Mass are meant to prepare us for this climactic moment of the liturgy. Our hearts should be filled with ardent longing to share in this real communion with our God.⁵

A final word, on boredom during the Eucharistic celebration. Thomas P. O’Malley writes in his book ‘Bored again Catholic’, that boredom can be of two types – good and bad. Good boredom can be very spiritually fruitful, but you’ll have to read his book for more about his thoughts on that. Although it is also true to say that if you’re bored at Mass, then you really don’t understand what it is and why you’re there. However, O’Malley’s thoughts on bad boredom are not without validity. He writes that *“The reality at many of our parishes is that we often seem to deal with more of the “bad boring” than the “good boring.”* I think he is over generalizing, but there are many who would agree with him.

He continues, *“The Mass often fails to capture our attention insofar as we have not been disposed to receive the Eucharist fruitfully. Those who gather in the Sunday assembly to listen to the Scripture readings proclaimed do not understand them. We seem less than committed to recognizing the gift of Christ’s presence among us in his Body and Blood. We remain indifferent to expressing the kind of Eucharistic friendship that is the consequence of our identity as those gathered into the body of Christ... at the heart of this negative sense of boredom is this: we do not rejoice in the Good News that Jesus Christ is Lord of the universe. [We see] suffering and death as the ultimate meaning of the human condition—blind to the real meaning of the world [which] is revealed in the crucified and glorified God-man who offers to the Father the entire life of the Church as a sacrifice of love. We carry out the Mass as obligation and task but have forgotten to delight in the offering, to comprehend the glories revealed on the table of the Word and on the altar of sacrifice, the glories unfolding in my own life if I only had the courage to see them. The response we must have, then, to the bad boring is to seek a renewed sense of the power of the Mass itself to evangelize the world. We seem to have forgotten the way that the beauty of the Mass can change not only us but the entire world. How Christ in the Eucharist, through the power of the Spirit, still draws the entire human family to himself and toward salvation.”*⁶

St. John Chrysostom

*Christ is present. The One who prepared that [Holy Thursday] table is the very One who now prepares this [altar] table. For it is not a man who makes the sacrificial gifts become the Body and Blood of Christ, but He that was crucified for us, Christ Himself. The priest stands there carrying out the action, but the power and grace is of God. “This is My Body,” he says. This statement transforms the gifts.*⁷

⁵ Edward P. Sri, [“A Biblical Walk through the Mass,”](#) in *Catholic for a Reason III: Scripture and the Mystery of the Mass*, ed. Scott Hahn and Regis J. Flaherty (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2004), 17–18.

⁶ Timothy P. O’Malley, [Bored Again Catholic: How the Mass Could Save Your Life](#) (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2017), 10–11.

⁷ John Chrysostom, [“Homilies on Betrayal of Judas.”](#) EWTN

Prayer before Mass

Almighty and everlasting God, behold, I come to the Sacrament of Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. I come as one infirm to the physician of life, as one unclean to the fountain of mercy, as one blind to the light of everlasting brightness, as one poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth. Therefore, I implore the abundance of Your measureless bounty that You would vouchsafe to heal my infirmity, wash my uncleanness, enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty and clothe my nakedness, that I may receive the Bread of angels, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, with such reverence and humility, with such sorrow and devotion, with such purity and faith, with such purpose and intention as may be profitable to my soul's salvation. Grant unto me, I pray, the grace of receiving not only the Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood, but also the grace and power of the Sacrament. O most gracious God, grant me so to receive the Body of Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, which He took from the Virgin Mary, as to merit to be incorporated into His mystical Body, and to be numbered among His members. O most loving Father, give me grace to behold forever Your beloved Son with His face at last unveiled, whom I now propose to receive under the sacramental veil here below.

Amen.

—Saint Thomas Aquinas

Thanksgiving after Communion

I give You thanks, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal God, that You have vouchsafed, for no merit of my own, but of the mere condescension of Your mercy, to satisfy me, a sinner and Your unworthy servant, with the Precious Blood of Your Son our Lord Jesus Christ. I implore You, let not this Holy Communion be to me an increase of guilt unto my punishment, but an availing plea unto pardon and forgiveness. Let it be to me the armor of faith and the shield of good will. Grant that it may work the extinction of my vices, the rooting out of concupiscence and lust, and the increase within me of charity and patience, of humility and obedience. Let it be my strong defense against the snares of all my enemies, visible and invisible; the stilling and the calm of all my impulses, carnal and spiritual; my indissoluble union with You the one and true God, and a blessed consummation at my last end. And I beseech You that You would vouchsafe to bring me, sinner as I am, to that ineffable banquet where You, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, are to Your saints true and unfailing light, fullness and content, joy for evermore, gladness without alloy, consummate and everlasting bliss.

Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

—Saint Thomas Aquinas

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Eucharist:** From the Greek word for "thanksgiving," it refers to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the consecrated bread and wine that become the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. It is described as "the source and summit of the Christian life."
- **Mass:** Also known as the Eucharistic Celebration, the Holy Sacrifice, or the memorial offering, it is the central act of worship in the Catholic Church where the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is represented.
- **Real Presence:** The dogma that in the Eucharist, the entire Christ (Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity) is truly, really, and substantially present under the appearances of bread and wine.
- **Divine Life:** The life of God communicated to believers, particularly through the Eucharist, allowing them to participate in God's divine nature.
- **Supernatural Gifts:** Gifts from God, specifically faith, hope, and charity, which enable individuals to know, trust, and love God beyond their natural human capacities. The Eucharist is presented as a source of grace for these gifts.
- **Transformation (in the Eucharist):** The process by which the hearts of the faithful are conformed to the heart of Christ through their participation in the Mass and reception of the Eucharist. This personal transformation is also meant to bear fruit in the transformation of the world.

- **Liturgy of Heaven:** The eternal worship of God by the saints and angels in heaven, in which the earthly liturgy is described as sharing or participating. The Mass is a "foretaste" of this heavenly reality.
- **General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM):** The comprehensive document that provides instructions for the celebration of the Mass, aiming to ensure "conscious, active, and full participation" of the faithful.
- **Good Boredom/Bad Boredom:** Concepts introduced by Thomas P. O'Malley regarding boredom during Mass. "Good boredom" can be spiritually fruitful, while "bad boredom" signifies a lack of understanding, disposition, or joyful engagement with the Mass.
- **Tabernacle:** A prominent and secure receptacle in a Catholic church where the consecrated hosts (the Body of Christ) are reserved outside of Mass, for adoration and for distribution to the sick.
- **New and Everlasting Covenant:** Refers to Jesus Christ Himself, whose sacrifice established a new and permanent relationship between God and humanity, superseding the Old Covenant. The Eucharist is the sign and embodiment of this covenant.

What is the central purpose and meaning of the Mass (Eucharistic Celebration)?

The Mass, or Eucharistic Celebration, is understood as a joyful, transcendent, and transformative experience centered on the real presence of Christ's Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. It is considered the "source and summit of the Christian life" (CCC 1324), where God is glorified and humanity is sanctified. It is a memorial offering of Christ's Passion and Resurrection, intended to effect union with God, communicate divine life, and serve as a guaranteed source of grace, strength, faith, hope, and charity. It is also seen as a participation in the heavenly liturgy, a foretaste of the worship in the "Holy City of Jerusalem."

How is Christ truly present in the Eucharist?

In the Eucharist, simple bread and wine are transformed into the literal Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. This transformation is not attributed to the priest's actions alone, but to Christ Himself, who, through the ministry of the priest, takes, blesses, and transforms these gifts. As St. John Chrysostom states, it is Christ's statement, "This is My Body," that "transforms the gifts," making the Eucharist the very substance of Christ.

What is the role of the faithful in the Eucharistic Liturgy?

The faithful are called to a conscious, active, and full participation in the Mass, involving both body and mind, and fervent with faith, hope, and charity. This participation is not merely external actions like singing or kneeling, but a more fundamental act of offering oneself to Christ and allowing oneself to be transformed by Him. The goal is to be made "one spirit with him" (1 Cor. 6:17) and to be "incorporated into His mystical Body." The entire celebration is arranged to facilitate this deep, internal engagement.

How does participation in the Eucharist lead to transformation?

Receiving the Eucharist is meant to conform hearts to the heart of Christ and to transform individuals into "one body and one spirit" with Him. This transformation is described as being drawn into God's own action, where the difference between Christ's action and our own is "done away with." This personal transformation is also intended to bear fruit in the transformation of the entire world, as individuals are empowered to evangelize and draw the human family towards salvation.

What is the relationship between earthly and heavenly liturgy?

The earthly liturgy of the Mass is understood as a "foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem." It is an "action of the whole Christ," and those who celebrate it on Earth are

already participating in the heavenly liturgy. This connection emphasizes the profound and sacred nature of the Mass, linking the present worship experience to the eternal worship in heaven.

Why might someone experience "boredom" during Mass, and how can it be addressed?

Boredom during Mass can be categorized as "good" or "bad." "Bad boredom" arises when individuals fail to understand the profound meaning of the Mass and their purpose in being there. This can stem from a lack of disposition to receive the Eucharist fruitfully, not understanding the Scripture readings, indifference to Christ's presence, or a failure to rejoice in the Good News. It suggests viewing Mass as an obligation rather than a delight. The remedy for "bad boredom" is to seek a renewed sense of the Mass's power to evangelize the world and to rediscover the beauty of the Mass that can transform both individuals and the world.

What is the significance of offering ourselves during Mass?

Beyond offering simple bread and wine, the faithful are called to offer themselves during Mass. This self-offering is a humble act of obedience and submission, asking to be conformed to Christ and transformed by Him, becoming one with Him by the Holy Spirit. This surrender to God's action is deemed essential not only for personal salvation but also for the salvation of the whole world.

What are the supernatural gifts necessary to experience the Mass fully?

To truly experience "awe and wonder" during Mass, more than just the five physical senses are needed. The sources emphasize the necessity of supernatural gifts, specifically faith, hope, and charity. These gifts enable a deeper understanding and reception of the divine presence and transformative power of the Eucharist, moving beyond mere ritual to a profound encounter with God.