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IMPRIMATUR

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Bishop of Worcester
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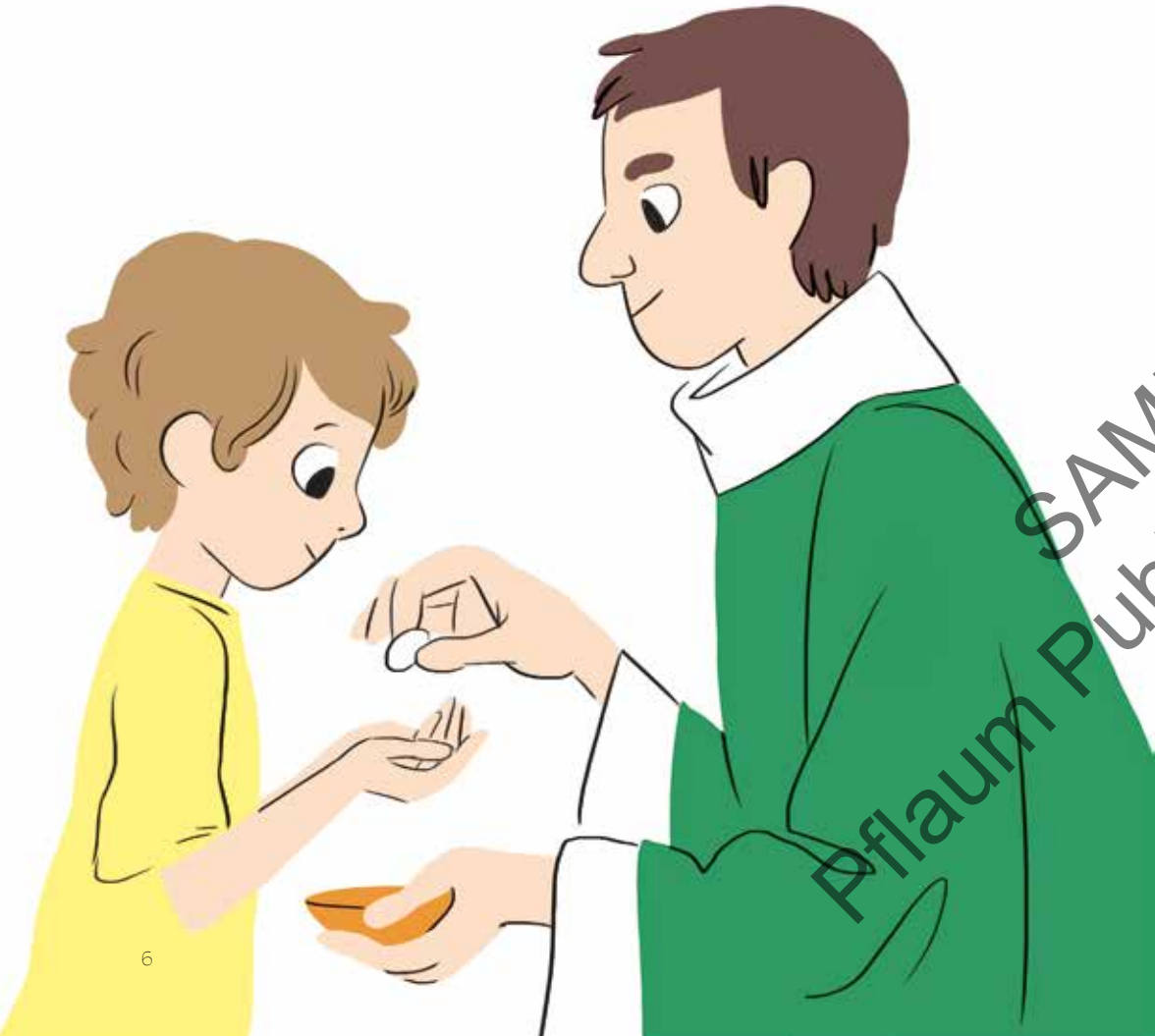
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The Sacrament of Eucharist
CELEBRATING THE GIFT OF JESUS



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SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION



The Bible is the book that recalls the encounter between God and humanity. From its very beginning, it says that God speaks to people and nourishes them.

Knowing they are cared for, God's people respond in faith and trust. But in order to live, people need to be nourished and be loved.

Just as the God of Moses fed the Chosen People with manna, God's Son, Jesus Christ, feeds his followers, the Christians. During his last meal before dying on the Cross, Jesus wanted to give himself as food for his friends. He asked them to celebrate this same meal again in memory of him.

Since then, every Sunday Catholics gather to pray, sing, and share the bread and wine that is the Body and Blood of Jesus. The bread and wine are Jesus himself who invites us to share his life and to love others as he does.



The people of God remember

Every year on Passover, Jewish people remember what God did for the Hebrews in the desert. Families gather around to share a meal. Each food is reminiscent of the time the Hebrews left Egypt.

The head of the family takes unleavened bread or matzah, blesses it, and shares it.

As they eat this bread, everyone remembers that the Chosen People were set free by God himself.

Jewish people

Like Christians, Jewish people believe in the God of Moses, but they do not recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Their religion is called Judaism.

Passover

*In Hebrew, **Passover** means “passage.” It is called this because the Angel of Death, who killed the first born of the Egyptians, passed over the houses of the Jews. They were spared by this “pass over.”*

Jesus shares bread and wine

During the last meal which Jesus shared with his Apostles, he took bread, blessed it, and said to them, “Take, eat, this is my body.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, “Take, drink all, for this is my blood that will be shed for you. You will do this in memory of me” (see Matthew 26:26–28).

The Apostles did not yet understand the meaning of Jesus’ words.

After his Resurrection, they would understand that Jesus always gave his life—in his words, in the bread and wine, and on the Cross.



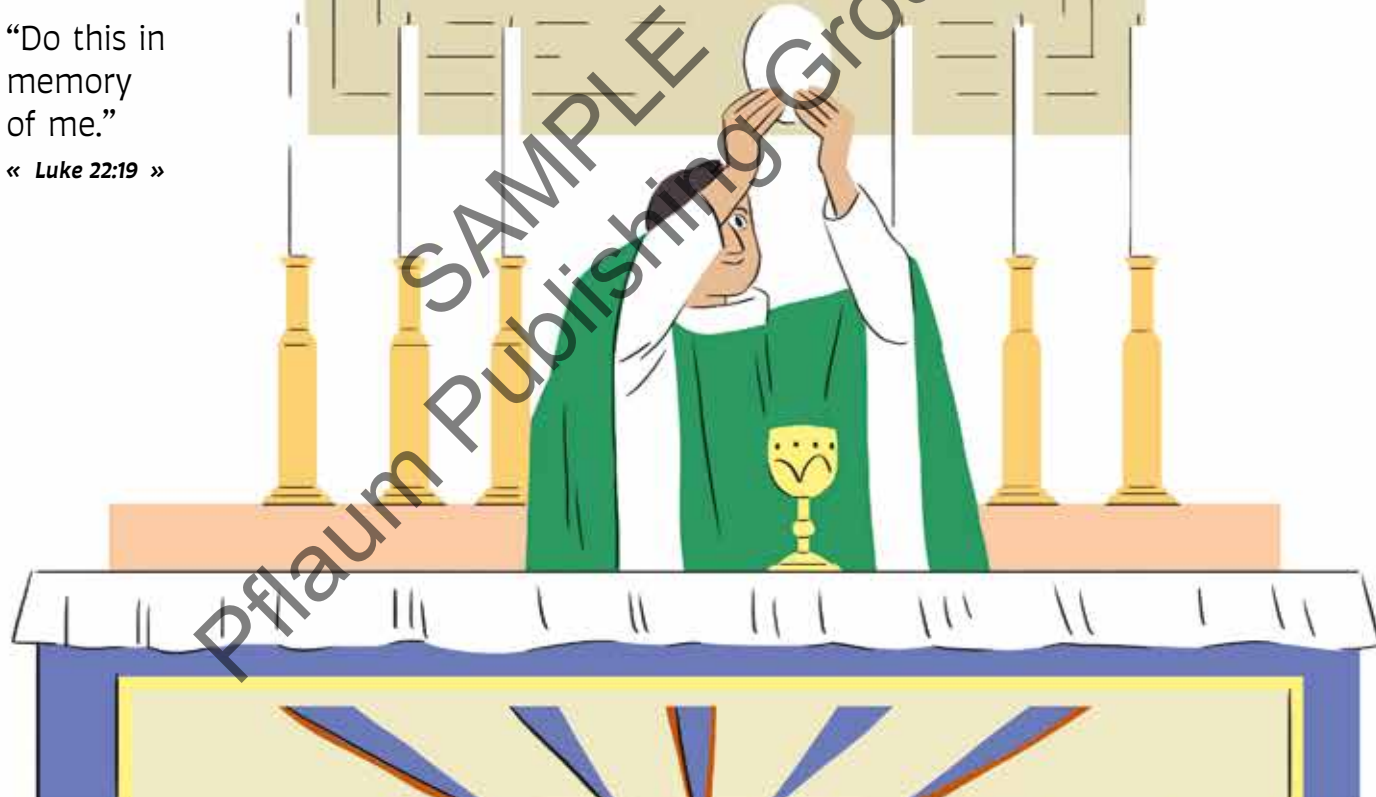
Bread and wine

Bread and wine are two things that make people live: bread satisfies and wine reminds us of a party. To live, we need to eat and be happy. To have the life of God in us, we need to receive Jesus. At Mass, through the power of the Holy Spirit and the actions of the priest, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

Christians remember Jesus' sacred meal

“Do this in
memory
of me.”

« Luke 22:19 »





“Take, eat”

During the Eucharist, the priest says, “Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying, ‘This is my body, given up for you.’ Then he took the cup of wine, again gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘This is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me.’”

The priest says these words and offers the bread and wine in the name of Jesus. This is a way of remembering the last meal that Christ shared with his Apostles, but even more important, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. We believe that today Jesus always gives himself to us in the Eucharist.

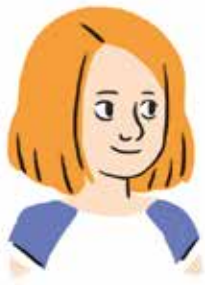
“This is my body”

Catholics believe that during Mass the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus, while still looking like bread and wine. This mystery is called “transubstantiation.” We believe that in the Eucharist Jesus is fully present and gives himself to us in love.

Host

*The word **host** comes from the Latin word meaning “sacrificial victim.” This name is given to the bread of Holy Communion.*

Questions



What is a sacrament?

We cannot see God. But Jesus left us visible signs called sacraments so that we can meet him and know that he is present. A Sacrament consists of actions and words that come from God. In the sacraments, God comes to us in person. The first of the Seven Sacraments is Baptism.



Why is Holy Communion is a sacrament?

For Catholics, Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of Jesus under the appearance of bread and wine. In Communion, Jesus makes himself present to us, as he has promised. This is why Communion is one of the Seven Sacraments.



Do the bread and wine really turn into Jesus's Body and Blood?

Catholics believe that the bread and wine truly become Jesus' Body and Blood. But they still look, feel, and taste like bread and wine. This is the great mystery of the Eucharist. Jesus is truly present in Holy Communion, also called the Eucharist. He gives us all his life, all his love, and all his presence.