

Call to Celebrate-Eucharist

Chapter 1-We Belong

Theme: The Sacraments of Initiation or the Sacraments of “Belonging” are Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. They are signs that we belong to God and to the Church.

Doctrinal Content

The Sacraments of Initiation bring us into the fold of the Catholic Church. They enable us to live lives of grace, allowing us to share in the life of Jesus and the Church.

Parent Background

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states “1212 the sacraments of Christian initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist - lay the foundations of every Christian life. “The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity.”

In other words, Jesus gave us the Sacraments so that we could be more like him. If we do not make a habit of partaking in the Eucharist, we do lose out on Sacramental grace. Time and time again, the saints remind us that when we fall “short of the mark” in our prayer lives, we lose touch with what we are called to be. The Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life. What is meant by this? In the following article, this statement is clarified:

Since the Christian life is essentially a spiritual life, we might say as well that the Eucharist is the “source and summit of Christian spirituality” too.

To the pious Catholic, that proposition may seem obvious enough, even if he does not quite understand why. Intuitively, he knows that the spiritual life means using

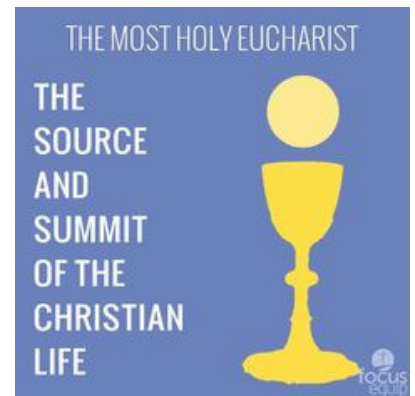
every means available to grow closer to Christ. And he knows that Christ Himself is present in the Eucharist in the most sublime manner. It makes sense, then, that the Eucharist should be central to the spiritual life of a Catholic.

But what the devout soul knows about the Eucharist intuitively should, where possible, become better known and more deeply experienced through systematic reflection on the Church's Eucharistic doctrine. The better we understand the Eucharist's role in Christian spirituality, the better we will be able to love Christ present in the Eucharist.

What follows is a summary of Catholic teaching on the Eucharist as both the "source" and the "summit" of Christian spirituality. We will consider each of these ideas in turn.

What Do We Mean By "Source and Summit"?

To say the Eucharist is the "source and summit of Christian spirituality" means at least two things. First, that Christian spirituality flows from the Eucharist as its source, the way light streams forth from the sun. And second, that Christian spirituality is supremely realized in and ordered to the Eucharist as its summit or highpoint – that to which all of our actions should ultimately be directed.



Christian spirituality, then, is a two-way street. It leads us from the Eucharist as our starting point out into the world of daily life and it takes us back home to the Eucharist after our sojourn in the world.

These two dimensions of the Eucharist – its being both the "source" and "summit" of Christian spirituality – reveal how the Eucharist, being Christ Himself, brings God and man together in a saving dialogue, a mutually giving and receiving relationship. In short, in a covenant of love. The Eucharist is at once the Father's gift of Himself in Christ to us and, through Christ, our offering of Christ and, with Him, of ourselves – our minds and hearts, our daily lives – to the Father.

As the source of Christian spirituality, the Eucharist revealed that our salvation begins with God, not ourselves. God offers Himself to man in Christ first. At the same time, as the summit of Christian spirituality, the Eucharist is man's supreme, grace-enabled, freely given offering of himself back to God through Jesus Christ, our high priest, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The union or intimate, personal fellowship

between God and man realized through God's gift of Himself to man and man's faithful response, we call communion.



Put in the traditional language of the Christian spirituality, we say that this communion with God is brought about by grace and lived out in the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. Because the sacraments are instruments of grace and means of growth in the theological virtues, we can say that Christian spirituality entails what Pope John Paul II called a "sacramental style of life."^[1] It involves using the sacraments to grow in the spiritual life. And because the greatest of sacraments is the Eucharist, Christian spirituality is above all Eucharistic: coming from the Eucharist as its source and directed to it as its summit or zenith. (The Eucharist: Source and Summit of Christian Spirituality, Mark Brumley. The Ignatius Insight)

Sunday Mass is an obligation. It is carried out because of a sense of duty, but, by definition, it is also carried out because of a promise; a promise made at Baptism to remain a part of the Body of Christ. Going to Mass is necessary to receive the graces that Jesus intended to give us through His sacrifice on the Cross and the Eucharist, at the Last Supper. Attending Sunday Mass is our duty and obligation because we promised to remain close to the Incarnate God.

Activity:

1. *Say the following short prayer: **Jesus, please help us to be open to what you will teach us today, together as parents and children. We thank you for each other, and the gift that we are to each other. Amen.***
2. *Explain to the children that you will be reading them a parable that Jesus told.*
3. *Read John 15:1-8 from the Bible.*
4. *Read it very slowly. Tell your child to close their eyes and picture this in their mind or they can look the picture at the end of this page.*
5. *Say the following:*
 - *I wonder who the Vine is.*
 - *I wonder who the branches are.*
 - *Jesus uses this image so that we can understand how important it is to remain with him.*

- *As a church we remain with Jesus by being with him. We can be with him by reading the Bible, praying and going to Mass. Each person together makes up the church.*
 - *I wonder what “bearing good fruit” means?*
 - *So, Jesus is saying very clearly, if we want to “bear good fruit” we must remain with him.*
6. *Watch the following video together. <https://youtu.be/XlbnzfG0yfo>*
 7. *Color the picture that was given to you by your teacher. You can add some grapes to it, and name some things that mean “good fruit” on the grapes.*
 8. *Complete the survey that your teacher gave you and return it to her.*

