

THE MOST HOLY BODY & BLOOD OF CHRIST; Cycle – A; June 7th 2026
Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14-16; 1Cor 10: 16-17; John 6: 51-58

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

The Catholic Church teaches that the Seven Sacraments are instituted by Christ. In other words, the Sacraments are directly or indirectly connected with the life and teaching of Christ. But we have the clear accounts of the Institution of the Eucharist by Christ at the Last Supper. The Eucharist is known to be the crown of the Sacraments. The reason for that is, when we receive a Sacrament we are filled with the grace of Jesus. Whereas when we receive the Eucharist, not only we are filled with grace, but also we receive the author of grace who is Jesus Christ.

And also after instituting the Eucharist, Jesus gave the apostles the mandate **“Do it in memory of me.”** So Jesus meant that the celebration of his Body and Blood should continue in the Church. The apostles took this command seriously and according to the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, which is the early history of the Church, the only celebration the apostles with the early Christians had, was the Eucharistic celebration. At the Pentecost the Church was born and the Christian community gathered together every Sunday to celebrate the Christian Sabbath and in that the apostles re-enacted the Last Supper. In Acts 2:42 we read: **“They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the Breaking of the bread and to the prayers.”** The term Eucharist or Eucharistic celebration was introduced in the Church in the later period and the **‘Breaking of Bread’** was the term used for the Eucharistic celebration at that time. The Eucharistic celebrations gave the early Christians endurance and unity amidst the Roman persecution which lasted for three centuries.

The major Christian denominations like, Lutherans, Baptists, Episcopalians and Methodists believe in the Eucharist and they also hold communion service occasionally. Unfortunately many Catholics don’t know the difference between the Catholic doctrine and that of these churches. So many Catholics think that there isn’t anything wrong in receiving Communion from any of these Churches. In fact, there is a fundamental difference between the Catholic doctrine and that of these Churches.

When Martin Luther started Protestant Reformation he didn’t want to keep anything common with the Catholic Church. At the same time, as he was a Catholic Priest, he wanted to keep the Eucharist with a different definition. According to Luther when the clergy pronounces the words of Consecration Jesus comes down from heaven and dwells in the bread and wine or he just sits in the bread and wine. So he called the

doctrine as **Consubstantiation**-means co-exist with bread and wine. Once the celebration is over Jesus too leaves the bread and wine.

The Catholic Church strongly opposes this doctrine, based on the very words of Jesus while he instituted the Eucharist. At Last Supper he blessed the bread and wine and giving his apostles said, "This is my Body and this is my blood. He didn't say, "I am in this bread and in the cup of wine." As the Church holds it, when priest pronounces the Consecration words, **the whole substance of bread is changed into the substance of the Body of Christ and of the whole substance of wine into the substance of the Blood of Christ through the efficacy of the Holy Spirit.** The Catholic Church calls it as **Transubstantiation**. However, "the outward characteristics, smell, color and taste of bread and wine, that is the 'Eucharistic species', remain unaltered."

It is true, the institutional words of Jesus on Eucharist is very short. But we have a very elaborative discourse of Jesus on Eucharist in John 6: 35-59 which we have just heard. Towards the end of his speech Jesus confirms, "**Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day**" (Jn 6:53-54). So it is very clear that to attain eternal life, it is essential that we should receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

Will anyone who receives the Body and Blood of Christ gain eternal life? If we take the letter of Paul to the 1Corinthians 11:23- 31 we know that the unworthy reception of the Eucharist is bringing not eternal life rather eternal punishment. Let us listen to the words of St. Paul, "**Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.** So it is very clear that the unworthy reception of the Body and Blood will bring judgment upon us. So let us make a good examination of conscience before we approach the Eucharist. If we feel unworthy, better we approach the Sacrament of reconciliation and then let us receive the Communion worthily.