

Eucharist

The Eucharist is the celebration that comes directly from Jesus' instruction at the Last Supper: "Do this in memory of me" (1 Corinthians 11:24–25). From the earliest Christian community, believers have gathered to break bread and share the cup, understanding this not simply as a memorial, but as a participation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The word *Eucharist* comes from the Greek *eucharistia*, meaning "thanksgiving." That is an important key to understanding what the Church is doing. At its heart, the Eucharist is an act of gratitude to God for the gift of Jesus Christ—his presence, his saving love, and his ongoing life in the Church. The New Testament reflects this spirit of thanksgiving again and again, reminding us that worship is rooted in gratitude.

The term *Communion* (from the Latin *communio*, meaning "sharing in common") highlights another essential dimension of the Eucharist. In receiving the Eucharist, we are brought into communion with Christ and with one another as the Body of Christ. It expresses both unity with God and unity within the Church. In Catholic understanding, it is helpful to distinguish between the celebration of the Eucharist as a whole and the reception of Holy Communion. The Eucharist refers to the entire liturgical action, while Communion more specifically refers to receiving the consecrated Body and Blood of Christ.

The Eucharist, then, is both gift and invitation. Christ gives himself to us, and we respond in faith, thanksgiving, and love. In every celebration, we are drawn more deeply into the mystery of Christ's self-giving and sent forth to live what we have received.