

## UNIT TWO: HOW WE CELEBRATE

### LESSON 5: THE EUCHARIST: Source and Summit of Christian Life

#### CONTENTS OF LESSON:

1. The Eucharist is considered the 'source and summit of Christian life' because it contains Christ himself. [CCC 1324]
2. **THANKSGIVING:** The word 'eucharist' means thanksgiving. We thank God for all of creation, for saving us and making us holy. [CCC 1360]
3. **MEMORIAL SACRIFICE:** The Eucharist was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper, as a memorial, in order to make present forever his sacrifice on the cross. The sacrifice offered on the cross is the same sacrifice offered on the altar, but in an 'unbloody' manner. [CCC 1323, 1365, 1367]
4. **PRESENCE:** In the Eucharist, the bread and wine actually take on the 'substance' of Christ: body, blood, soul and divinity. This is known as 'transubstantiation'. This change takes place by the words of Christ (spoken by the priest) and the action of the Holy Spirit. [CCC 1374-76]
5. **WEDDING BANQUET:** The Eucharist is a meal or banquet where we 'eat' and 'drink' Christ himself. The effects of Holy Communion: We are more closely united to Christ; our spirits are nourished; we become more loving; our venial sins are cleansed and we come closer to the Body of Christ. [CCC 1391-96]
6. *At each Mass Jesus, the bridegroom invites us to himself. He desires to live with us and through us. The Church (and each one of us) is the bride. We must respond with love, faith and humility (like the Centurion who said 'Lord I am not worthy...'). We must prepare ourselves by examining our consciences and asking pardon, by observing the Eucharistic fast; and by showing respect by our actions and dress. (E.g. Bowing before Christ) [CCC 1385-87; SC81]*



REFERENCES: Rev 19:9.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts A,B & C; blackboard.)

*N.B. Attached are two 'puzzles' These could be given to the students to do at home or, better still, as an extra class.*

#### I. STARTER:

- Most of you must have heard the story of Cinderella. Imagine you are Cinderella and try to enter into her feelings (Even if you are a boy, you can try to imagine this).
- You are down in the dark and smoky kitchen cooking and maybe dreaming of the most wonderful day of your life, when you were dressed like a princess and danced with the prince. Suddenly a messenger announces: "The prince would like you to come upstairs to the hall." You have no time to change or clean up, but you climb the stairs. There you see everyone gathered, but you only have eyes for the prince, the one you have been dreaming about. Even though you are dressed like a servant and not looking very beautiful, the prince seems to recognize you. He has your glass slipper in his hand. He asks you to sit, then kneels in front of you and gently removes your shoe and fits the glass slipper on your foot. Of course the slipper fits! The prince looks into your eyes with great joy and says, "At last I have found you, my bride! Will you marry me and be my queen?"
- What do you think Cinderella felt? What were her thoughts? [*Students write and then share what they have written. The teacher could add some thoughts if not brought out:*] "Wow! I can't believe its true! The prince on his knees in front of me, a servant! He actually loves me and wants me to be his queen. All my dreams have actually come true. Instead of a servant, I am going to be a queen... and the queen of such a loving and wonderful king!"
- Maybe the Cinderella story is so popular because it is what we all are made for. Deep down we all hope that someone loves us and considers us special. The good news is: IT IS TRUE, AND IT IS OUR STORY! The King of Kings is actually the bridegroom and the Church is his bride. He has given his life for his bride, and at every Mass he says to each of us, "Come to me. I love you... I desire you... Are you ready to be mine, and live your life with me?"

## DEVELOPMENT:

- Think now about your parents. What would you say was the high point of their lives? You might have heard them talking about their lives, or seen photos. [*Students share*]
- For many people their wedding day was the high point of their lives, when they made a promise to love each other and began their new life together.
- The Church considers the Eucharist to be the ‘Wedding Feast of the Lamb’ (the lamb is Jesus)... and each of us is invited, not just as a guest, but to close union with Jesus. He is the bridegroom, the prince, and the Church is the bride... that means each of us too.
- That’s why the Eucharist is known as the ‘source and summit of Christian life’. [*Draw sketch on board*]. Can you explain how this image can be compared to the Eucharist? [SUMMIT: A summit is the highest point of a mountain and the Mass is the high point of our week. SOURCE: The mountain is the starting point of the river. In the Eucharist, God gives himself to us. Our spiritual life flows from him. If we realize this, the Mass will become the high-point of our lives.]
- Let’s try to understand the Eucharist better.



*[Distribute Handout A. Read the words of Christ (at the centre) aloud. Do one section at a time. The students suggest answers and then the correct answers are filled in together:]*

### 1. THANKSGIVING:

- The word ‘eucharist’ means thanksgiving.
- At the Mass we thank God for all of creation, for saving us and making us holy.

### 2. MEMORIAL SACRIFICE:

- The Eucharist was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper.
- “Take this” “given up for you” “poured out for you.” (A sacrifice is something you give up)
- By dying on the cross.
- The Eucharist makes present the sacrifice on the cross. It is the same sacrifice being offered in a different way: without blood. The altar takes the place of the cross.

### 3. PRESENCE:

- In the Eucharist, the bread and wine actually take on the ‘substance’ of Christ: body, blood, soul and divinity.
- This is known as ‘transubstantiation’. This change takes place by the words of Christ (spoken by the priest) and the action of the Holy Spirit. [CCC 1374-76]

### 4. WEDDING BANQUET:

- Because it began with a meal (the Last Supper); because it points to the wedding feast in heaven.

### 5. The effects of Holy Communion: We come closer to Christ; our spirits are fed; we become more loving; our venial sins are cleansed and we come closer to Christ’s Body (the Church).

- If Christ has done so much for us, how should we respond?
  - (With love, faith and humility. (Like the Centurion who said to Jesus, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed.” This is why we use these same words as we prepare to receive Jesus.)
  - By preparing for each Mass. (We should look at our lives and check how we have behaved; ask pardon from God before approaching the table of God.)
  - By showing respect by my actions and dress. (If we believe that Christ is truly present, we would show him respect and be more conscious of him than of others. It is fitting that we make a deep bow before the tabernacle as we enter and leave. We should also dress in a decent way, not immodest or too casual.)

## II. INTERIORISATION/PRAYER:

*[Give out handout B. Students read the words on the left, and then write their response as a prayer to Jesus. Distribute Handout C to be done at home.]*

**HOME ASSIGNMENT:** ⇨ Read the handout. ⇨ Do the puzzles with your family.