

# The Eucharist is our thanksgiving to God



## Introduction

In the Mass Jesus is making the greatest prayer there has ever been. He gives Himself to His Father to the last drop of His blood. He holds back nothing. He gives everything.

It is this prayer of self-giving in love for sinners like us that is at the very heart of the Eucharist. Here we see what love looks like.

How can we say thank you to God in a way that even comes close to being worthy of the great gift He has given us in His Son?

God makes it possible.

We offer what we can – the fruit of the earth and the work of our hands. Through the power of the Holy Spirit God accepts these simple offerings and transforms them into the Body and Blood of His Son.



## Pope Francis

“At every celebration of Mass, our lives, offered in union with Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, become, in him, an offering of praise and thanksgiving pleasing to the Father, for the salvation of the world. The liturgical renewal called for by the Second Vatican Council sought to help the faithful understand more fully and share more fruitfully in the Eucharist.

At Mass, Jesus becomes truly present and allows us in some way, like the Apostle Thomas, to touch his flesh and renew our faith in him.”

(15<sup>th</sup> November 2017)



## Prayer Moment

Take a moment to thank God for the gift of His Son Jesus.

What gift are you most grateful for in your life?

How can you show God that you are grateful to Him not just in words but in your actions?

Repeat the words on the banner:

This is my body... broken for you

broken for me

broken for... (name someone who needs prayer).

# The Eucharist is our vocation



## Introduction

Jesus said that no-one lights a lamp only to put it under a tub. The lamp must be in a place where it can give light to take away the darkness.

In the same way the Eucharist, that we are so blessed to receive, cannot be hidden away. It needs to show itself in our words and actions.

It is a gift not only for ourselves, but through us it can be the gift of God's presence and God's love for the world.

Wherever we go we carry Christ within us.

At the end of every Mass we are blest and sent out renewed and clear about who we are and the work God has given us to do.



## Pope Francis

“Repeat frequently that “I am on a mission” and not simply that “I have a mission.” To be on a permanent mission “requires courage, audacity, imagination and the desire to go beyond, to go even further,” “The Lord invites those called to go out of themselves in order to be a gift for others.”  
(5<sup>th</sup> January 2017)



## Prayer Moment

Say this prayer written by Blessed John Henry Newman:

God has created me to do Him some definite service;  
He has committed some work to me which He has not  
committed to another. I have my mission – I may never  
know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for nothing.

I shall do good. I shall do His work.

I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my  
own place while not intending it – if I do but keep His Commandments.

Therefore I will trust Him. Whatever, wherever I am,

I can never be thrown away.

If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him;

in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him;

if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain.

# The Eucharist is the place where we remember



## Introduction

Every Mass is the place of remembering the Truth that sets us free. Here we see and hear Jesus tell us that we are loved. He says that there is no greater love than this, to lay down your life for your friend. He tells us that this is His body which is broken and given for us. This is His blood which is poured out in mercy so that we can be forgiven.

Problems in our lives can overwhelm us sometimes. We can be pulled in different directions and find no time to stop and listen to the voice of the Lord. But at Mass we are still. We see Him. We hear Him. We remember. Here our lives can make sense again. He died for me. I am here to live for Him. I want to live my life showing some small love for the infinite love He has shown to me.

Here we can cast our worries and fears knowing that we are heard, knowing that we are loved.

Pope Francis said to take part in the Mass “is to live once again the redemptive Passion and Death of the Lord. It’s a hymn of praise: the Lord makes Himself present on the altar to be offered to the Father for the salvation of the world” (*Homily in the Holy Mass, St Martha’s Residence, February 10, 2014*).



## Pope Francis

“Jesus died for love! And in the Eucharist, He wishes to communicate to us His paschal, victorious love. If we receive it with faith, we can also truly love God and our neighbour, we can love *as* He loved us, giving His life. This is the Mass: to enter in the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus; when we go to Mass it’s as if we went to Calvary, the same thing. But think: if we in the moment of Mass go to Calvary – let us think imaginatively – and we know that that man there is Jesus, do we then permit ourselves to chat, to take photographs, to engage somewhat in a show? No! Because it’s Jesus! We will certainly be in silence, in the joy of being saved. When we enter the church to celebrate Mass we should think this: I am entering Calvary, where Jesus gives His life for me. And thus chats disappear, comments and the things that remove us from this most beautiful thing that is the Mass, disappear. It’s the triumph of Jesus!”  
(22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017)



## Prayer Moment

Write a prayer for yourself or for someone you know who is struggling with life. Ask God to touch their hearts with his love. Fold the prayer up and place the prayer near the banner.

# The Eucharist is food for the journey



## Introduction

We know that if we do not eat we get weak, sick and we will eventually die. If we do not receive the “bread of life” we will get spiritually sick and the life of faith will struggle to stay alive in our hearts. That is why Jesus said:

“I am the bread of life.

The one who comes to me will never be hungry;  
the one who believes in me will never thirst.” *John 6:34*



## Pope Francis

“How can we practise the Gospel without drawing the necessary strength to do it, one Sunday after another, from the inexhaustible spring of the Eucharist? We Christians need to participate in Sunday Mass each week because only with the grace of Jesus, with his living presence in us and among us, can we put into practice his commandment to love, and thus be his credible witnesses,” The Eucharist and Mass, he said, are where we find our strength for daily life.  
(13<sup>th</sup> December 2017)



## Prayer Moment

Pray the Diocesan Prayer for the Eucharistic Congress and for Synod 2020:

We thank you Father for the love you have shown us  
in the gift of Jesus, your Son.

Keep us grateful each day for the blessings that surround us.

As we are fed by you,

so now send us out to share what we have received  
with our hungry brothers and sisters.

We humbly ask your help to become the Church  
that you are calling us to be:

a community that listens, that trusts, that lives with courage  
and that puts out its nets into new waters.

May the gentle presence of Christ in our hearts  
be a source of healing, of new life  
and of a deeper trust in you.

We ask this in faith through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Amen.



# The Eucharist is Jesus our healer



## Introduction

Now Jesus was in one of the towns when a man appeared, covered with leprosy. Seeing Jesus he fell on his face and implored him. 'Sir,' he said 'if you want to, you can cure me.' Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said, 'Of course I want to! Be cured!' And the leprosy left him at once. *Luke 5:12-13*

No-one touched lepers. You simply didn't do it. If you saw a leper you would do everything you could to avoid them.

Not Jesus. All He sees is someone in pain, isolated and in need of a friend. Jesus reaches out to touch and to heal.

When we approach Jesus, when we come to receive Holy Communion, all the needs we carry in our hearts are touched by Him. He Himself comes to be the answer to our deepest needs: the answer to the prayer that we hardly know how to put into words. His power is at work inside us. Trust in His healing presence in your heart. It's the slow action of love through Holy Communion, oneness with God that can be a source of blessing and healing throughout our lives.



## Pope Francis

"The Lord surprises us by showing us that He loves us even in our weakness." In the Mass, in our encounter with Jesus, "the Lord encounters our fragility in order to bring us back to our first calling: that of being in the image and likeness of God." This, Pope Francis said, "is the environment of the Eucharist, this is the prayer." (15<sup>th</sup> November 2017)



## Prayer Moment

Repeat this prayer... do it for yourself and then do it for others by saying  
"...enter under N/. 's roof..."

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof  
but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Pray for anyone you know who receives Holy Communion at home or pray for someone you know who is in need of the healing power of Jesus in their life.

# The Eucharist is a place of mercy



## Introduction

In the story of the Forgiving Father (or the Prodigal Son) we see the Father who welcomes his son home with open arms and with tears of joy in his eyes. No condemnation. No angry words. A feast is prepared. “Welcome home my child.” We also see the older brother standing outside, refusing to celebrate and refusing to take a place at the table with his wayward brother.

Jesus knows that sometimes we think there should be justice, not mercy. But he asks us to be people of mercy. If we are sinners who have been forgiven by God how can we deny this to our fellow sinners? It’s at Mass that we learn what mercy looks like so we are able to be merciful in our turn to our brothers and sisters.

Throughout His years of ministry Jesus didn’t only talk about mercy and forgiveness, He showed it. He went to the homes of sinners and ate with them. Every Mass is a place of mercy. Jesus calls us, sinners though we are, to take our place at His table as His friends.



## Pope Francis

“If we don’t feel in need of God’s mercy and don’t think we are sinners, it’s better not to go to Mass. Do you go to Mass because it’s a habit or a time to see friends or is it something more?”

“When we go to Mass, we find ourselves with all sorts of people. Does the Eucharist we celebrate lead me to consider all of them as brothers and sisters? Does it increase my ability to rejoice when they do and to weep with those who weep?”

Pope Francis said it is not enough to say one loves Jesus; it must be shown in love for those he loved. Attendance at Mass should lead to “the grace of feeling forgiven and able to forgive others”.

(12<sup>th</sup> February 2014)



## Prayer Moment

Reflect on these words Pope Francis spoke at the end of the Year of Mercy:

“The Holy Door is now closed, but the door of mercy in our hearts continues to remain wide open. We are called to travel along the road of mercy on which we meet so many of our brothers and sisters who reach out for someone to take their hand and become a companion on the way.”

Make a promise to God to walk with someone who needs to see the face of mercy.

# The Eucharist is a challenge to become what we receive



## Introduction

St Augustine said “you become what you receive.” By this he meant that when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion we become the very Body of Christ ourselves. We become, in the words of St Teresa of Ávila, the hands and feet of Jesus in the world today.

The Amen we respond with at the moment of Holy Communion is an act of faith in the great mystery of the Eucharist – this is no longer bread or wine, this is now the Body and the Blood of Jesus himself.

But it is also our Amen to being the Body of Christ in the world. We say, yes I will be the love and the care of Christ to all whom I meet.



## Pope Francis

Celebrating the Eucharist should make a difference in the way a parish community lives. At Mass, Christ gathers people around him “to nourish us with his word and his life. This means that the mission and identity of the church begin and take form there.” “A celebration could be perfect from an aesthetic point of view – it can be beautiful – but if it does not lead us to an encounter with Jesus Christ, it risks not giving any nourishment to our hearts and lives.” There must be “coherence between our Eucharist and our lives.”

(12<sup>th</sup> February 2014)



## Prayer Moment

Pray this prayer and then pray it again replacing the word ‘yours’ with the word ‘mine’. How different does it feel?

Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks with compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes,  
You are his body.

*Teresa of Ávila (1515 – 1582)*