



## Our Reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist “Come Let Us Adore Him”

by Fr. Charles M. Mangan

The doctrines of the Catholic Church, although profound and intellectually challenging, are all quite simple – as we note concerning the Church’s dogma of the Most Holy Eucharist.

To the pious peasant, the seven-year old preparing for her First Holy Communion, and the learned theologian, the Church’s forthright teaching is identical: the Most Holy Eucharist is the real, true and substantial Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ present under the appearances of bread and wine. After the Consecration of the Mass, only the physical characteristics (*accidents*) of bread and wine remain; now the Substance (*essence*) on the Altar is Jesus Christ. (Precise language is vital in speech and liturgical music when discussing the Blessed Sacrament. We never call Holy Communion “bread and wine.” This is false.) Each Particle of the Sacred Host and each Drop of the Precious Blood contains the *entire* Jesus—the very same Messiah Who lived thirty-three years on earth and Who now lives risen and glorified in Paradise. Only validly ordained priests may transform (*transubstantiate*) bread and wine into the Savior’s Flesh and Blood.

The Most Holy Eucharist *is* Jesus Himself. In asserting this Real Presence of Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament we accurately use the valuable equation: **the Holy Eucharist = Jesus.**

Jesus is *present* . . . whenever two or more gather in His Name . . . in the soul of one who lives in the state of sanctifying grace, that is, in God’s friendship free of mortal sin . . . in the Church’s other six Sacraments . . . and during Mass in the Word of God proclaimed, in the assembled body of baptized believers and in the person of the priest. However, He is present in a *most exalted manner*—in a way that surpasses all the others—in the Most Holy Eucharist because He, the God-Man, is really, truly and substantially present in His Sacred Divinity, Sacred Humanity, Flesh and Blood—the exact Humanity, Flesh and Blood that Mary conceived through the Holy Spirit in her chaste womb and that she, without surrendering her virginity, brought forth in a rustic stable in tiny, obscure Bethlehem on the first Christmas Day.

God—the Supreme Being Who created Heaven and earth from nothing—is to be worshipped and adored by us, His human creatures. Since the Redeemer Who is God is really present in the Holy Eucharist, the Blessed Sacrament deserves the same worship and adoration as that given to the Lord of the Universe.

Our Holy Catholic Church possesses the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Catholics regardless of age, race, wealth, education and depth of devotion enjoy the singular opportunity and duty to love and worship the Holy Eucharist before, during and after Mass.

How can we demonstrate our genuine love and adoration for “the Bread of Life and the Chalice of Everlasting Salvation?” These are our “Ten Commandments for Eucharistic Reverence”:

**I. Attend Holy Mass on Sundays and Holydays.** Catholics are to go to Mass each Sunday and Holyday of Obligation. (To attend Mass during the week is an inestimable privilege and is strongly recommended by the Church.) A serious obligation, the grave precept to attend Mass on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation, begins for children when they reach the “age of reason” (that is, when they can distinguish between right and wrong). We participate in the Mass—“the greatest communication between the Almighty and His sons and daughters”—by responding to the prayers and singing and listening attentively. We adore the Holy Eucharist by our full, active and conscious participation in the Mass during which Christ is made present through the power of the Holy Spirit as the priest prays: “This is My Body. . . This is the Cup of My Blood.”

**II. Prepare well for each Mass we attend.** The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, rooted in Jesus’ Last Supper celebrated on Holy Thursday evening, is “Calvary perpetuated”—the re-presentation of His Sacrifice on Good Friday. It continues to our day *the Calvary event*—Jesus’ selfless Offering unto death to His Father through the Paraclete. We adore our Eucharistic Lord when we prepare to receive Him worthily in Holy Communion by doing as the Church mandates: assenting to the Church’s teaching regarding the Holy Eucharist; fasting from food and drink (medicine and water may be taken) for one hour before receiving Holy Communion (the sick are excused); confessing to a priest in the Sacrament of Penance our mortal sins that we have not yet confessed. (A mortal sin is a thought, word, desire or action that involves “grave matter” with sufficient reflection and full consent of the will.) Frequent confession of venial sins is highly encouraged. Many choose to perform one of these spiritual “exercises” before Mass: reading the Scriptures to be used during the Sacred Liturgy; reciting the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary; making the Way (“the Stations”) of the Cross.

**III. Demonstrate by our behavior in the church that we believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.** When entering and upon leaving the church, we face the Tabernacle where Jesus is reposed and genuflect. (Those prohibited by poor health may bow to the Tabernacle as a mark of reverence.) We also genuflect when passing in front of the Tabernacle and in front of the Altar when the Body and Blood of Christ remain on it. Kneeling is an apt sign of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament. Our modest and fitting dress (avoiding shorts and indecent apparel) signifies our belief in and worship for the Holy Eucharist. Dressing as if we think it’s a “big deal” to approach the presence of the Messiah in the Tabernacle illustrates adoration for Jesus’ Body and Blood. We avoid chewing gum in the church as a testimony to the unparalleled splendor of the Blessed Sacrament, thereby giving witness that we are near *Emmanuel*—“God-with-us.”

**IV. Enjoy the silence to which the Holy Eucharist beckons us.** Grandiose or plain—a majestic, ornate basilica or a sparsely appointed prison chapel, any space that houses the Blessed Sacrament is special and unique from other locations. There we act differently than in another place. We maintain a respectful decorum before the Holy Eucharist. Before, during and after Mass, we avoid useless talking in the presence of the Tabernacle so as to worship and focus our attention on the Risen Lord Jesus. Christ is summoning each of us to reflect quietly before His Body and Blood. “Who is He?” “Who does God want me to become?” Unnecessary chattering in the hallowed presence of the Holy Eucharist spoils the golden opportunity to learn much at the Master’s Feet. There is a time for opening our mouths: responding to the prayers, singing, greeting our neighbors before and after Mass outside of the church and in the church’s vestibule. But when in the *church proper* we love and adore the Eucharistic Jesus by opening our hearts and ears and closing our mouths so to listen to His “pearls of wisdom.” Silence helps us to bask in the Blessed Sacrament’s indescribable glory.

**V. Receive Holy Communion with joy and fervor.** The worthy reception of the Body and Blood of the Lord—a “foretaste” and “pledge” of Heaven, an impetus for authentic charity towards the poor, weak, defenseless and needy and a nudge towards angel-like chastity—should be the highlight of our day, week, month, year . . . life. Having prepared as indicated, we joyfully and fervently advance in awe towards the Altar. We receive Jesus either on our tongue or in the hand. (A profound bow before receiving is most appropriate.) When receiving on the tongue, one says “Amen” and permits Christ to be placed on it. If receiving in the hand, one makes a “throne” for the Lord by placing his stronger

hand on the bottom and his weaker hand on top. Saying “Amen” and receiving the Host (instead of reaching for It), the communicant takes one step to the side, stops, and places the Host in his mouth by using the stronger hand from the bottom. The Host is never received “on the run.” If receiving the Precious Blood from the Chalice (an option in some parishes but not an obligation, since one receives the “total” Jesus—Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity—even under one Species alone), then the communicant carefully accepts the Chalice after responding “Amen” and consumes the Precious Blood. Our diligent reception of Holy Communion signals our love and adoration for Christ. May we always receive the Son of God with dignity and devotion!

**VI. Spend time with the Eucharistic Jesus outside of Mass.** The Eucharist is continually adorable—during and outside of Mass. During Eucharistic Processions, Forty Hours, Holy Hours and Visits to the Blessed Sacrament (whether exposed in the Monstrance or reserved in the Tabernacle), we adore the Messiah while simultaneously growing in likeness to Him. We *infallibly* draw closer to the Eucharistic Jesus by spending time with Him as we sincerely seek to be converted.

**VII. Make frequent Spiritual Communions.** The cherished practice of the Spiritual Communion in which one invites the Lord into his soul, as He would come during Sacramental Communion, is to be fostered as an act of love and worship. Spiritual Communions involve the desire to receive the Eucharistic Lord when one is impeded from making the usual Sacramental Communion and are made anywhere.

**VIII. Cultivate a rapport with the Ever-Virgin Mother of the Eucharist.** Mary, present with her Divine Son on Calvary, is somehow present during each Holy Mass. Venerating Our Blessed Lady leads to adoration of the Master. The benevolent Mother instructs us how to love, adore and receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

**IX. Know the Saints who lived for the Holy Eucharist.** The Church’s brilliant history is overflowing with men and women, boys and girls who loved, adored and, in some cases, died for the Holy Eucharist. Acquainting ourselves with their affection for Holy Communion spurs on our own development in love and worship of the Eucharistic Jesus.

**X. Arrange for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to be offered for both the living and the dead.** There is no more beautiful gift for the living and the faithful departed. Requesting Masses shows one’s belief in the efficacy of Christ’s Sacrifice and conveys worship of the Holy Eucharist—the “Treasure of Treasures” that enriches those who love and adore the King of Kings really present in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

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