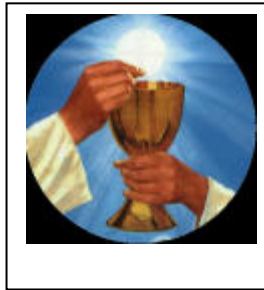


It is because of these first two parts of the Mass that we can have the Eucharist (the “giving-thanks”). Without God’s forgiveness and saving action there would be nothing to give thanks for. And so our sacred meal continues when the bread and wine are presented. Then the priest does what Jesus did – a new covenant (promise). We sometimes break our promises; God never forgets his. And so his promise is fulfilled and God gives himself to us.

Thanks be to God.

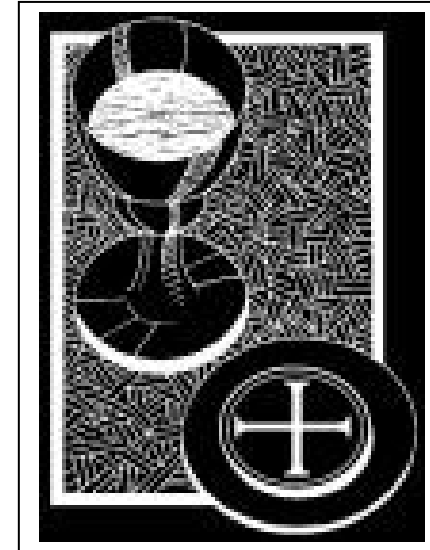


What does Mass mean to you?

Is it a good thing that attendance at Mass on Sunday is an obligation?

What is the most special moment in the Mass for you?

If you could change something, what would it be?



In the feeding of the 5,000, food and love become one and the same thing. The people are hungry so Jesus feeds them with bread and fishes.

In the Eucharist, we recognise our hunger for God. In his love for us, God recognises that hunger and feeds us with the Bread of Life. There we meet God the creator in his gift of Creation.

## “EUCHARIST”

The Jews owed everything to God. He'd given them a country, liberation and a promise of a great future. He was their protector and friend who only wanted their lasting happiness. Could there be anything more worth celebrating? So each year, on the feast of Passover, each family got together to do just this. They celebrated by recalling all that God had done for them, especially how he had set them free from slavery.

Maybe it's like an old person telling you all the good times they have had, perhaps showing you an old photo or two. Just remembering can bring back a feeling of joys passed and fill you with gratitude.



At the Passover meal, the Jews were filled with wonder and gratitude. They used a prayer in which they told God how much he meant to them. It was called a “Eucharist” – meaning “giving thanks”.

In their preparation for this meal they sacrificed (offered) a lamb to God. They showed their closeness to God by eating his lamb together. They could share his food because they were members of his family. What a gift!”

## THE LAST SUPPER

Jesus specially chose this ancient Jewish feast of Passover to give to his friends his greatest gift: himself. “I have wanted so much to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer”, he told them.

It must have been very moving, Jesus knowing that this would be his last meal with people he loved. He knew his time was short. He also knew how much they would need him when he was gone. So he gave them as much as he could. “Take this all of you and eat it. This is my body, given up for you”. And later, “Do this in memory of me”. In the Passover, the lamb was the sacrifice. Jesus replaces the lamb with himself. He is the perfect Sacrifice. And he offered himself on our behalf.

Every meal with Jesus was special. The timing and events of this meal gave it untold significance.

What's the most special meal you have shared and why?  
How much does a meal mean to you?

## A MEAL WITH JESUS



How much did sharing a meal mean to Jesus? Was it like a quick snack at McDonalds! No, a meal, even a simple one, meant far more than that. A meal shared symbolised friendship. Not only that you were friends, but also that the person you shared the meal with was a friend of God. For this reason, you would not sit at table with a leper or sinner or tax collector because you would not want to be associated with someone who was a religious outcast.

If you did, you could be contaminated by them, you might share in their “God-given punishment”. The fact that Jesus ate with such people was used against him. He did so specifically to show his love for them, that they could consider themselves a member of his family. He also took the opportunity to emphasise God's love for them, the sick, the sinners, the tax collectors, the despised. Simply by sharing a meal, he made this point and then crowned it with forgiveness and healing.

## OUR EUCHARIST

Our “meal” expresses the same; our acceptance of each other (though we don't always live up to the ideal) and God's perfect acceptance of us. We gather to celebrate this. The dressing-up, music, wine, candles and ritual actions like processions help us to realise this.

The first thing that we celebrate is his forgiveness; that he has done so much for us, even though we don't deserve it. This comes in the

**Penitential Rite.** Then we remember some of the things God has done as we listen to readings from the Old and the New Testaments; stories of God's saving action, especially in the life of Jesus. After the Gospel we hear how this saving action continues in us today. This is all part of the **Liturgy of the Word.**

