

Lesson 7

HOLY EUCHARIST: THE BREAD OF LIFE



The Israelites were travelling from Egypt to the land of Canaan. On the way all the food items got over. They were very hungry. God fed this hungry people miraculously and satisfied them. He gave them 'Manna' from heaven. It was white in colour, tasted like bread, mixed with honey. The Israelites ate 'Manna and were free from hunger and tiredness (Ex 16:1-36). They were strengthened and moved towards the land of Canaan.

The Gospel describes the event of Jesus multiplying the loaves and feeding the hungry. A lot of people crowded around Jesus to listen to His words. When they were hungry, Jesus multiplied the loaves miraculously and fed them (John 6:1-15).

Jesus, who gave bread to satisfy physical hunger also gave food for soul. Jesus said: “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry” (John 6:35).

Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist in order to nourish and strengthen our spiritual life. Through this sacrament Jesus gives us His own body and blood as the nourishments for our soul. Jesus gives us His body and blood in the form of bread and wine. Thus in the Holy Eucharist the body and blood of Jesus become our spiritual food and drink.



The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament wherein our Lord Jesus Christ gives us His body and blood in the form of bread and wine.

Jesus instituted this Holy Eucharist on Pascal day of the Passover feast. On the day of Passover feast they celebrated the memory of the liberation of Israel from Egyptian slavery. The term “Paschal” means ‘Passover’. Passover’ means ‘going from one to

another'. On this Pascal day at the banquet, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to his disciples and said. "Take, eat; This is my body'. Then He took a cup, gave thanks to God and gave it to them and said; "Drink from it, all of you; For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:26-30). Thus Jesus gave his own body and blood as spiritual food and drink to his disciples. The Passover in the Old Testament was liberation from Egyptian slavery. The Passover in the New Testament is liberation from sin.

The Holy Eucharist is the loving banquet of Jesus giving salvation. It is the bread that gives us life. This banquet gives us eternal life because Jesus said; "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day" (John 6:54). In the Holy Eucharist, we receive the real body and blood of Jesus since Jesus says; "For my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink" (John 6:55).



The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament of communion. The primitive Christian community participated in this banquet joyfully,

with one mind. Their participation in this loving banquet united or made them one in Jesus. “Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts” (Acts 2:46).

In the loving banquet of the Holy Eucharist, we also become one in Jesus. “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:17). By our participation in the Holy Eucharist, we become one in the body of the church. We who participate in the same banquet should live in unity, loving and helping one another. The sharing on the altar must lead us to sharing in life.

Since the Holy Eucharist is a banquet, those who participate in it have to receive the body and blood of Jesus with proper preparation and merit. Then only the banquet will be complete. Let us share this Holy Eucharist, the nourishment of our soul with proper devotion.

Let us pray

Jesus, the Bread of life, we praise you for giving us your own body and blood through the sacrifice on the Cross.

A word of God to remember

“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them” (John 6:56).

Let us read the word of God with devotion

John 6:52-58

My decision

I will participate in the Holy Mass and receive Holy Communion with due devotion not only on Sundays, but also on all other occasion as chance permits.

Let us do

Write that mystery of the rosary in connection with the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

Let us find out the answers

1. What is the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist?
2. Why did Jesus institute the Holy Eucharist?
3. When we participate in the Holy Mass, we must receive Holy Communion. Why?
4. Why do we call the Holy Eucharist, the sacrament of communion?