

THE EUCHARIST

Introduction:

The Eucharist (from the Greek = thanksgiving) is the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, offered to God as a sacrifice for the remission of sins.

Teaching notes:

- For pedagogical reasons, we first study the sacrament of the Eucharist, then the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, of which the Eucharist is the means.

- But the actual order is reversed. This unique sacrament is first and foremost the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, of which the Eucharist is the fruit (through Communion).

This remark is of paramount importance today: by talking only about the Real Presence, without seeing that it is the means and fruit of Our Lord's Sacrifice, we have forgotten the latter, reducing it to a mere meal. Ultimately, we deny the Real Presence.

I. THE REAL PRESENCE.

The Catholic faith affirms that after their consecration, the bread and wine no longer exist, but that under their species (or appearances, or accidents) are the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. Transubstantiation:

This is the name given by the Church to this wonderful change. The substance of the bread disappears, giving way to the Body of Our Lord. The same applies to the wine, which is replaced by the Blood of Our Lord. Only the appearance of bread and wine remains (which is a true and permanent miracle).

B. Law of concomitance:

Under each species (bread and wine), there is the Body and Blood of Our Lord. But be careful, Christ here is alive. So, there is also his human soul. And since Jesus Christ is God and His divinity is eternally inseparable from his humanity through the mystery of his Incarnation, there is also His divinity. Thus, under each species, the whole substance of Christ is present: His Body, His Blood, His Soul and His Divinity.

Notes:

- This is why the Church only gives communion to the faithful in the form of bread. They would not receive any more by receiving communion in both forms, and it is difficult from a practical point of view.

- It is therefore the entire substance of Christ (with His two natures and His person as Son of God) that is contained in each species; it replaces that of bread and wine, which have disappeared.

- So why two species? Because of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (see below).

II. THE INSTITUTION.

Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament on the eve of His death, on Maundy Thursday, by performing these same gestures and commanding His apostles to repeat them: "*Do this in memory of Me.*" If He gave them this command, it is because He also gave them the power to do so. He made the apostles and their successors priests: this is the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Note: The power of the words of the Gospel is undeniable. Jesus Christ affirms that this - the bread - is His Body and that - the wine - is His Blood. In chapter VI of Saint John, Our Lord announced this marvelous sacrament: "*Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life.*" Those who denied the unanimous Tradition of the Church on this point had to admit that they were tampering with the texts. Luther: "*I have often sweated profusely to prove that there is only bread and wine in the Eucharist, but there is no way out of it: the text of the Gospel is too clear.*"

III. THE SENSITIVE SIGN.

- The matter of the Eucharist is bread (exclusively wheat) and wine (grape juice in which the products of fermentation have not been removed, even if it has not yet fermented). Any other materials would be invalid. The bread is unleavened (without yeast for the sole historical reason of commemorating the Jewish Passover).
- The visible sign of the sacrament is the species of bread and the species of wine. It is these that refer to the sublime reality hidden within them: Jesus Christ in His entirety. At the Offertory, the priest already offers the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ (which will appear) and not the bread and wine.
- The form: "*This is my Body*" "*This is my Blood.*"
- Words that could not be clearer, indicating the change they bring about. The words that follow refer to the Sacrifice and are not necessary for validity.

It should be noted that the real presence remains as long as the species are not corrupted (by communion). Hence the worship due to Him in our tabernacles and the fact that Jesus Christ truly dwells in our churches. We therefore owe to the Eucharist the worship of Latria due to Jesus Christ, without any restriction.

IV. THE MINISTER.

The Consecration that performs this sacrament is therefore only valid when performed by a priest who intends to do what the Church wants (to perform the sacrifice of Our Lord and thus transubstantiate the bread and wine).

This is the essential act of the priest and his sublime dignity.

Only priests (and therefore bishops) have the power to consecrate the Eucharist.

On Maundy Thursday, they alone received this power, which they passed on to their successors through the sacrament of Holy Orders.

The ordination of a woman, like the 'Mass' of a non-priest, is invalid and truly monstrous.

V. THE EFFECTS OF THE EUCHARIST.

- Increase in sanctifying grace. It is the greatest of the sacraments, for it contains not only an abundance of grace, but the very author of grace.
- Guarantee of eternal life (cf. John 6).
- Reduces (and eliminates) lust.
- Conform to Christ in His Passion (the Eucharist realizes the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross and pours out his graces upon us: "*Those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son*" (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4-14).

One must therefore be in a state of grace and have the right intention.