

# Year of the Eucharist

October 2004 to October 2005

Part 31 in a series on  
**The Year of the Eucharist**  
from  
The Office of Rites and Sacraments  
Department of Worship & Spiritual Life  
Catholic Diocese of Memphis  
in Tennessee

## The Structure of the Mass The Liturgy of the Eucharist ~ The Eucharistic Prayer

### Institution Narrative and Consecration

After Sunday liturgy one day when our children were young, I asked them how many stories they had heard during Mass. The older ones shifted immediately into classroom gear and talked about the Old Testament reading and the Gospel. In reply I told them they were correct, but that they had heard more than just those two stories. It was first-grader, Stephen, who recalled that Father had told another story while he was standing at the altar. He remembered that it was about Jesus giving bread to his disciples. He was right. He had recalled the *Institution Narrative*.

**“On the night before he died, he took bread and gave you thanks and praise; gave the bread to his disciples and said, ‘Take this, all of you and eat it; this is my body which will be given up for you.’ When supper was ended, he took the cup...”** (*Eucharistic Prayer III*).

The Institution Narrative is the telling of the story of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. It is always recited in the context of thanksgiving and praise which characterize the Eucharistic Prayer. This story of Jesus' great act of thanksgiving sets the context for the words of consecration. These are not stand alone magic words; rather, they are key words within the telling of the story of the giving of the new covenant in which we are invited to participate.

Christ is present in every celebration of the Eucharist with the same love and the same offering up of himself that he expressed at that first Eucharist. And that is the point. In the midst of all else – the action of the priest, the posture and singing and responding – in the midst of all, Christ is present inviting us to a deeper life of faith, to a deeper life of dwelling in God.

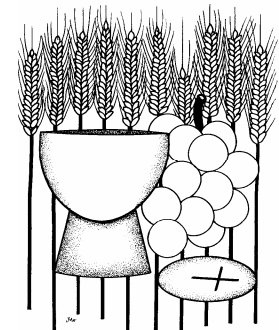
### Memorial Acclamation, Anamnesis and Offering

When we remember a loved one who is gone from us, the memory can conjure up a variety of emotions. Often the memory makes us feel closer to our loved one, almost as if that person is present in the memory. Closing our eyes, we can almost see and hear the person again.

Remembering during the Mass is somewhat similar. The difference is *anamnesis* – that unique type of remembering which brings together the past and the present. Christ is really present – present in the assembly, in the word proclaimed, in the priest and in the Eucharistic species, that is, the bread and wine. Our remembering through story what he did and who he is for us enables us to connect with his presence. We, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, come to recognize his presence in the breaking of the bread. He is present, but we come to recognize that presence.

Christ indeed has died; Christ indeed is risen; Christ indeed will come again. We know this acclamation to be true, proclaim it with such certainty, because we have reconnected through the telling of the story and the action of joining Christ in his great act of thanksgiving to the Father, *eucharistia*.

So let us hear and see the One who invites us always to join with him in Eucharist.



FROM  
**THE REAL PRESENCE  
OF JESUS CHRIST**  
(USCCB, JUNE 2001)

#14. The Mystical Body and Eucharistic Body of Christ are inseparably linked. By Baptism we enter the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, and by receiving the Eucharistic Body of Christ we are strengthened and built up into the Mystical Body of Christ.

The central act of the Church is the celebration of the Eucharist; the individual believers are sustained as members of the Church, members of the Mystical Body of Christ, through their reception of the Body of Christ in the Eucharist.

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