

# Year of the Eucharist

## October 2004 to October 2005

Part 33 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  
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### The Structure of the Mass

#### The Liturgy of the Eucharist

#### The Eucharistic Prayer

As Catholics, we are called to be a Eucharistic People. As such, our life flows from and into the Celebration of the Eucharist, the Mass.

Remembering that *Eucharist* means *Thanksgiving*, are we able to say that we are a *People of Thanksgiving*? Remembering that the Eucharistic Prayer is a Prayer of Thanksgiving and of Offering, are we able to say that we are a *People of Offering*? We can only answer *YES* if each of us can affirm that we are individual persons of Thanksgiving and Offering. If that is who each of us is when we come to Eucharist, together we will be becoming the Eucharistic People God yearns for us to be. We will be a Eucharistic People to the degree that we each live lives of thanksgiving and offering.

Before we leave the topic of the Eucharistic Prayer, I offer a few helps to entering into this great prayer at Mass. In our own prayer, long before we arrive at Sunday Mass, let us regularly quiet ourselves and ask God for the grace of honesty as we ask...

1. Do I consciously try to develop an attitude of giving thanks in daily happenings?
2. Do I view my life's treasure chest as half empty or half full?
3. Am I pleased for others when they have more than I do... more material things, more success, more money, more love?
4. Do I make it a point to say, "Thank you" to others, even for small favors?
5. Do I say, "Thank You" to God each night before I fall asleep?
6. Do I practice offering myself when occasions arise... or do I sit still and hope someone else will do it, give it, sign it, make it, clean it, pray it?
7. Do I consciously try to offer to God as gift whatever it is that I cannot change?
8. Do I practice letting go when Wisdom calls for letting go, whether it be in things large or small?
9. Do I always have to be right or first, or can I allow someone else to shine?
10. Do I regularly make some offering to the poor... of my time, material things, money?

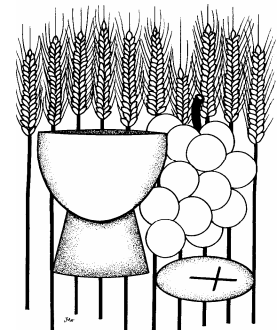
St. Augustine had a beautiful and simple way of talking about giving himself completely to God. Using the image of physical space, he spoke in terms of the space within him. He felt that if there was only a given amount of space, he wanted to be sure it was reserved for God and that nothing unwanted would occupy that space.

Two more questions for reflection...

11. What "takes up space" in me?
12. Can I make more room for God's life and love in me by letting go of something... fear, resentment, jealousy, feelings of inadequacy?

Perhaps in our private prayer, we could join our hearts and minds to St. Augustine's, by praying one of his own prayers:

**Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy;**  
**Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy;**  
**Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love what is holy.**  
**Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy;**  
**Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.**



**"In the humble signs of bread and wine, changed into his body and blood, Christ walks beside us as our strength and our food for the journey, and he enables us to become, for everyone, witnesses of hope. If, in the presence of this mystery, reason experiences its limits, the heart, enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, clearly sees the response that is demanded, and bows low in adoration and unbounded love."**

*Pope John Paul II*  
*Encyclical letter on the*  
*Eucharist, Ecclesia de*  
*Eucharistia, No. 62*

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