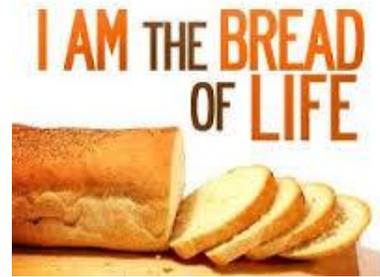


## THE EUCHARIST BECOMES FULFILLING ONLY AS MUCH AS WE LIVE THE EUCHARIST

The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith. It is the essential part of the mass. "The mystery of faith" that we celebrate in the Eucharist is the Paschal Mystery – the death, resurrection and ascension – is the central mystery of the Christian Faith. Therefore, participation in the Eucharist is the paramount reason we gather.

Jesus said to the Jewish crowds: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."



God gave us the "living bread." God continues to give us the living bread because we need it. We in turn must give our bread to those who need it.

"Celebrating the Eucharist transforms us individually and as members of a community called to bring love and hope to people living in poverty." *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

"Whoever recognizes the Lord in the tabernacle, recognizes him in the suffering and the needy; they are among those to whom the world's judge will say: "I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me" (Mt 25:35). (*Cardinal Ratzinger*)

God gives us Bread. God gives us Bread because we need it. We in turn must give our bread to those who need it. *And then we must ensure that they have the resources to bake their own bread.*

ASCENSION: The *Risen Christ* in the Eucharist acts as "a compelling force for inner renewal, an inspiration to change the structures of sin in which individuals, communities and at times entire peoples are entangled." (*St. John Paul II*)

We may not like each other, some may not like us – we would not share a meal with them – but at mass we assemble – we become one Body of Christ – our disunity becomes unity.

Our "fraternal communion" in the Eucharist leads to "a determination to transform unjust structures and to restore respect for the dignity of all men and women, created in God's image and likeness." (*Pope Benedict XVI*)

"Transformation by Christ in the Eucharist must compel us to address injustices which degrade the life or dignity of others – the poor, the unborn, immigrants, the elderly – all brothers and sisters in need." (*USCCB*)

"The "food of truth" – the Eucharist – "demands that we denounce inhumane situations" such as poverty, inequality, and violence." (*Pope Benedict XVI*)

Saint John Paul II wrote that "if our Eucharistic worship is authentic, it must make us grow in the awareness of the dignity of each person." The Eucharist "increases, rather than lessens, our sense of responsibility for the world today." Fueled by the Eucharist, we become aware of our responsibilities to each other.

The Eucharist becomes fulfilling only as much as we live the Eucharist.

(Readings for the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ)