“Do this in memory of me.” We hear these words at every Mass during the consecration. These words echo the words that Jesus speaks to his disciples at the Last Supper in the Gospel according to Luke: “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me” (22:19). The connection between the Eucharist that we celebrate today and the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his disciples so long ago is probably one of the first things we learned about the Eucharist. On the most basic level, we know that we gather at Mass to remember Jesus and his Paschal Mystery: the mystery of his passing over from death to new life. The Paschal Mystery reconciled our sinful human nature to God, granting us the gift of eternal life.

Yet, there is something different about the way in which we remember Jesus and his Paschal Mystery at Mass. We don’t simply tell Jesus’s story to recall it, nor do we seek to reenact his sacrifice like a historical play. Rather, we remember Jesus in a way that makes Jesus and his Paschal Mystery present in our midst, and joins us to it. In the Eucharist, we offer, or re-present (put forth again), Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross, uniting our own offering with it. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine become Christ’s Body and Blood. By receiving it, we become Christ’s Body in the world.

Can you think of any rituals or actions in your life by which you make the memory of someone or something present or tangible to you?

How have you experienced Christ’s presence at Mass?

Paragraph 7 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy names Christ’s presence in the Mass in multiple ways: in the person of the Priest Celebrant, in the Eucharistic species (the consecrated Bread and Wine), in the action of the sacraments, in the Word of God (the Scriptures), in the gathering of the people, and when the Church prays and sings. Try to come up with a word in which each letter of the word stands for one of the ways in which Christ is present in the Mass (for example, PEAS: Priest, Eucharist, assembly, Scripture). When you are at Mass, use this word as an easy reminder to help you look for and recognize Christ’s presence in all of these places!