

Explaining the Eucharist  
By Deacon Tim Sullivan

Helping our children understand the mystery and power of the Eucharist is one of the most important responsibilities of Catholic parents.

Jesus said in John 6:54 “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.” He demonstrates what He means by this at the Last Supper, when He changes the bread and wine into His body and blood and says: “Do this in memory of me.”

Jesus offers us the Eucharist as the way that we can participate in His sacrifice on the Cross, when He gave to humanity His body and blood. His sacrifice is not over; it’s not a thing of the past. It is timeless and made available to us as much today as when He suffered and died on Calvary.

At every Mass, the bread and wine are placed on the altar, representing the lives of the faithful who are present. So everyone present should be consciously putting their lives, their sacrifices, challenges and hardships, on the altar in the form of the bread and wine.

The priest then asks the Holy Spirit to come upon the gifts of bread and wine and to make them into the body and blood of Jesus. The Holy Spirit does this, and so each of us at Mass becomes united in the most powerful way with Jesus when the priest, as our representative, says the words of consecration on behalf of Jesus, “This is My body” and “this is My blood.”

Our lives, joined with the divine life of Jesus, are then offered to God the Father with a prayer that He will accept these gifts and fill the faithful with graces. If the faithful actively and faithfully participate in this offering, every aspect of our lives can be transformed and infused with grace.

*“The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?” 1 Corinthians 10:16*