

- Well, young people...I guess you go back to school this week.
- Just remember what it says in the book of Sirach: *“My son, from your youth choose instruction, and until you are old you will keep finding wisdom...For in her service you will toil a little while, and soon you will eat of her produce. She seems very harsh to the uninstructed; a weakling will not remain with her... [but] you will find the rest she gives, and she will be changed into joy for you... You will wear her like a glorious robe, and put her on like a crown of gladness.”*(Sir 6:18-31 RSV)
- But also remember that what they teach you there is only of temporary value. The knowledge of our faith is what concerns eternity, and facilitates our journey toward eternal life.
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- Well...we’re right in the middle of Jesus’ “Bread of Life” discourse in chapter 6 of the Gospel of John, which continues through the next couple of weekends.
- This 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of John is extremely important in the Church’s teaching of the Eucharist, and all Catholics should read it unbroken in its entirety.
- Because we Catholics are spoiled; we take this great gift of Jesus to us so much for granted because we can receive it even daily if we wish.
- But what a gift it truly is! And that is why we should receive it only with the utmost reverence and thanksgiving.
- After all...He did not have to leave it to us. And yet...He did, and with it He remains with us bodily...in every Catholic Church...in every adoration chapel.
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- Jesus says: “This is my body. This is my blood...Take and eat; take and drink. ”
- He doesn’t say: “This is my body...but not really; just a symbol.”

- We see how the Church has believed the reality of the Eucharist as the Real Presence of Christ from as early as chapters 10 & 11 of 1 Corinthians, to the writings of the early Fathers of the Church, to our current Church teachings.
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- In fact, one of the primary reasons non-Catholics convert to the Church is that they begin reading the early Fathers of Christianity, who believed unequivocally that the Eucharist is truly the Body & Blood of Jesus Christ.
- In fact, this was believed by ALL Christians until the 1500s and the coming of the Reformation...and still by the vast majority of Christians—Catholics (1.2 billion...Eastern Orthodox (about 400 million).
- Even some Protestants (Anglicans, Episcopalians, Lutherans) believe in a form of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, though not as absolutely as ourselves.
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- The Church calls the Eucharist *“the source and summit of the Christian life...for in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ Himself.”* (CCC 1323)
- Just a few hours before He’s hauled off to unjust judgment, scourging and crucifixion, Jesus gives us what is truly a divine gift—divinity inherent in the giver and in the gift itself.
- Many of our non-Catholic Christian brethren will say it is simply bread and wine, and it was just a community meal.
- But think about it: Jesus and the apostles had community meals daily...from their own small gatherings while traveling, to the feeding of the 5000...but never in any other place does He say: “This is My Body; this is My Blood. ”

- It's called the Last Supper because it was the final meal He had with His apostles before His execution...and in less than 24 hours He would be dead in the tomb...and He knew it, of course.
- Jesus commanded "*Do this in memory of Me*"...this re-enactment of the Last Supper in which we participate out of space and time with Him and the apostles and the Heavenly Host...and in that sacrifice of the True Lamb upon the cross for our salvation.
- ...not a "re-crucifixion" or a representation as is mistakenly believed by some non-Catholics, but a re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice...and a participation in His sacrifice on Calvary.
- This holy sacrifice is presented to God the Father as Jesus' interceding for us...for the forgiveness of sins and for our salvation.
- Listen carefully to the Words of the Eucharistic prayer today and you will hear that.
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- Now the Church teaches us that Mass every Sunday is a minimum obligation of the worship of God and of thanksgiving to Him.
- But it is so much more a privilege...to receive God Himself in the Eucharist—to receive truly His body, blood, soul and divinity.
- At judgment we will no doubt weep at each time we dared miss Mass...not only on Sundays, but every time we were able to attend.
- Only then will we see with eyes uncovered the glory, power and gift that the Mass truly is.
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- Is the Eucharist truly Jesus flesh and blood, soul and divinity? Most certainly.

- As He will assure us next weekend: “...*the bread which I shall give if my flesh*” ...unless *you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life...*”
- Is it a hard teaching? Yes, absolutely. After all, we sense the Eucharist as simply bread and wine.
- But we know Christ IS truth and is God...so what He says not only IS, but must be.
- As St. Ambrose said of the Eucharist: “*The power of the blessing prevails over that of nature, because by the blessing nature itself is changed...Could not Christ’s word, which can make from nothing what did not exist, change existing things into what they were not before? It is no less a feat to give things their original nature than to change their nature.*”
- And as St. Thomas Aquinas wrote: “*What God’s Son has told me, take for truth I do; Truth Himself speaks truly, else there’s nothing true.*”
- And in this true food, like Elijah in our first reading, Jesus fortifies us for our journey with His superabundant grace...that we may continue along the road of life towards the mountain of God.

Reading 1

[1 Kgs 19:4-8](#)

Elijah went a day's journey into the desert,  
until he came to a broom tree and sat beneath it.  
He prayed for death saying:  
"This is enough, O LORD!  
**Take my life, for I am no better than my fathers."**  
He lay down and fell asleep under the broom tree,  
but then an angel touched him and ordered him to get up and eat.  
Elijah looked and there at his head was a hearth cake  
and a jug of water.  
After he ate and drank, he lay down again,  
but the angel of the LORD came back a second time,  
touched him, and ordered,  
"Get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you!"  
He got up, ate, and drank;  
then strengthened by that food,  
**he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb.**

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9](#)

**R. (9a) Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

I will bless the LORD at all times;  
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.

Let my soul glory in the LORD;  
the lowly will hear me and be glad.

**R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

Glorify the LORD with me,  
Let us together extol his name.

I sought the LORD, and he answered me  
And delivered me from all my fears.

**R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy.  
And your faces may not blush with shame.  
When the afflicted man called out, the LORD heard,  
And from all his distress he saved him.

**R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

The angel of the LORD encamps  
around those who fear him and delivers them.

Taste and see how good the LORD is;  
blessed the man who takes refuge in him.

**R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

Reading II

[Eph 4:30—5:2](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,  
with which you were sealed for the day of redemption.

All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling  
must be removed from you, along with all malice.

And be kind to one another, compassionate,  
forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.

So be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love,  
as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us  
as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma

Gospel

[Jn 6:41-51](#)

The Jews murmured about Jesus because he said,  
“I am the bread that came down from heaven, ”  
and they said,

“Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph?

Do we not know his father and mother?

Then how can he say,

‘I have come down from heaven?’”

Jesus answered and said to them,

“Stop murmuring among yourselves.

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him,  
and I will raise him on the last day.

It is written in the prophets:

*They shall all be taught by God.*

Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me.

Not that anyone has seen the Father

except the one who is from God;

he has seen the Father.

Amen, amen, I say to you,

whoever believes has eternal life.

**I am the bread of life.**

Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died;

this is the bread that comes down from heaven

so that one may eat it and not die.

**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.”**