

REFLECTIONS ON THE MASS: A MEAL LIKE NO OTHER

By Karen Pourbabae

The third and final component of the Mass as described by D' Ambrosio in Exploring the Catholic Church is the meal, the Lord's Supper as well as a holy sacrifice. Christ becomes present in the bread and wine so we can receive Him into ourselves. He literally becomes our food.

Why bread and wine one might ask? Bread is considered basic daily nourishment. In the Our Father we petition God to "Give us this day our daily bread." In John 6:35,33, Jesus tells the crowd, "I am the bread of life... which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Bread is our daily physical and spiritual sustenance and the symbol of life found in Christ.

Wine is the blood of the grape, obtainable only by crushing. It represents the cup of suffering, the price our Lord paid so we might be free. At the same time, wine symbolizes the cup of joy and reminds us of the future messianic banquet in heaven. The Blood of Christ in Communion will bring us to full spiritual vitality just as our own blood bathes every cell in our body to nourish, cleanse, and purify. So while we are actually receiving the living Christ into ourselves, the symbolic meaning of the bread and wine add richness to the sacrament.

"The Eucharist is a great deal. Consider the exchange we're invited to make. We come forward, put our humble gifts on the altar---our little sacrifices, imperfect good works, our need and brokenness---and what do we get back in return? We receive the Lord's own life, bursting with power to heal and transform us." (D' Ambrosio)

It truly is a meal like no other!

Dear Lord,

I joyfully receive You in the bread and wine! You are my daily bread, the very life that sustains me spiritually and physically. When I drink the wine, I am thankful for the cup of suffering You took for me and look forward to the cup of joy---reunion with You in heaven. As I partake of Holy Communion, I receive Your life, bursting with power to heal and transform me! Amen.