

# Eucharist: Source and Summit of Christian Life

by Fr. Mark Pavlik  
May 2, 2010

We continue our seven-part series on the sacraments this week by looking at the sacrament of the Eucharist. This article is so vast that it could easily take up thousands of pages. Since I do not have that much space in the bulletin, I would rather just focus on one aspect. The Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* notes that in “taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, the source and summit of the Christian life, they (the faithful) offer the divine victim to God and themselves along with it. And so it is that, both in the offering and in Holy Communion, each in his own way...has his own part to play in the liturgical action.” (LG 11)

So what do we mean by “source and summit”? To say the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian spirituality means our participation in the Eucharist, both in receiving and in prayer before, strengthens us with grace to lead a strong Christian life which in turn brings us into communion with the Lord, which is the goal of our faith.

As the source of Christian spirituality, the Eucharist reveals that our salvation begins with God, not ourselves. So we must live our lives to reflect that by praying for guidance and maintaining a life in sync with Christ. In the Gospel, Jesus tells His followers: “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me, you can do nothing.” (Jn 15:5) Therefore in participating in the Eucharist, we are turning to God to be nourished in our Christian journey.

At the same time, as the summit of Christian spirituality, the Eucharist is our supreme and freely given offering of ourselves back to God through Jesus Christ, our high priest, by the power of the Holy Spirit. If we think about it, this is precisely our experience when we share in the Eucharist. In every Mass the Liturgy of the Word introduces us to our participation in the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ and hence, introduces us to the Eucharistic Meal, to union with Christ.

Our communion is also a celebration of our communion with one another. In sharing in the Eucharist, we are not only united with Christ, but with one another. In this way, we are more closely united as the Body of Christ. This weekend we will expand our celebration of community as we welcome our First Communion class to join us in sharing the Eucharist for the first time. Please keep them in your prayers as they come to the table of the Lord, that their love for Jesus in the Eucharist may be a source of strength their entire lives.