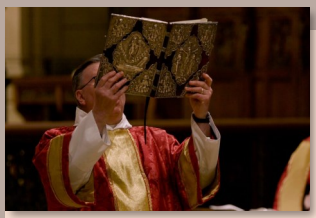
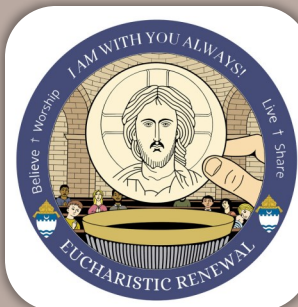


Encountering the Eucharist

Believe ✦ Worship ✦ Live ✦ Share



The *Book of the Gospels* is a bound liturgical book containing all the Gospel Readings used during Sunday Mass and Solemnities for years A, B, and C. Because it's a liturgical book, it is considered sacred. Thus it is sometimes beautifully bound and decorated and always to be treated with reverence. The *Book of the Gospels* is ordinarily carried in procession by the deacon. However, in the absence of a deacon, the lector or reader assigned for the day may carry up this book and place it on the altar. The *Book of the Gospels* is put on the altar so that when the deacon or priest carries it to the ambo during the proclamation of the Gospel at Mass, there is a connection between the "table of the Word" at the Ambo and the "table of the altar." We are fed by both.

What We Believe...

The Angelic Presence During Mass

Perhaps you've seen the short film on the internet titled: *The Veil Removed*. It's a video that reveals the coming together of heaven and earth at Mass, as seen by saints and mystics, revealed by scripture and in the *Catechism* of the Catholic Church. In case you are unfamiliar with this film, it begins in a typical large city and focuses on a particularly large Catholic Church. A young man of twenty-something seems to have wandered into the church from the street just as Mass has begun. We don't know anything about this young man; however, we have the impression that he's searching for something and has decided to come to church. The inside of the church is speckled with a few faithful, most of whom look as if they are in their sixties or seventies. There are not many participants in the big church. After the gospel has been read, we notice some light being reflected by the tiled floor. As a family is bringing up the gifts to the altar, suddenly we notice that a pair of angels are accompanying them. These angelic beings proceed to process themselves into the sanctuary and take their place. Meanwhile, at least a dozen other such angels are marching down the main aisle of the church and also enter the sanctuary to the wonder and amazement of the congregation. By the time of the consecration and elevation of the chalice, we see the cross with a still alive Christ hanging upon it and suspended over the altar surrounded by a myriad of angels and saints. The special effects used in this



video and the quality of the cinematography are quite excellent. St. Augustine once said, "The angels surround and help the priest when he is celebrating Mass." Unfortunately, to our modern "sensibilities," such ideas might strike us as being overly pietistic at best and like superstitious nonsense at worst. It's too incredible, isn't it? Can we really believe that all the angels and saints are present there with us as we worship our Lord in the Holy Mass remaining unseen, and yet know they stand beside us uniting Heaven and Earth? And yet, this is what has been believed down through the centuries. If one pays close attention, the *Preface* of the Eucharistic Prayer attests to the presence of many angels. For example, "And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts ..." (Common Preface I). John Chrysostom also says, "For if the very air is filled with angels, how much more the Church! ...The angels exult, the Archangels rejoice, the Cherubim and Seraphim join us in the celebration of [the] feast..." To attend Mass for the angels is a great joy, as "Christ is the center of the angelic world. They are his angels" (CCC 331). They love God and will gladly pray for us at Mass anywhere in the world! The angelic world is mysterious, but we are encouraged to ask them for their intercession since they can help us to adore the Divine Majesty with devotion.

Sharing Our Very Life: Preparing for the Mass



“You are attended by thousands upon thousands and myriads upon myriads of Angels and Archangels, of Thrones and Dominions, of Principalities and Powers. Beside you stand the two august Seraphim ...They sing your holiness. With theirs, receive also our acclamation to your holiness.”

-from the Anaphora of Serapion, bishop of Thumis, in Lower Egypt circa 350 A.D.

Once, St. Teresa was overwhelmed with God’s goodness and asked Our Lord “How can I thank you?” Our Lord replied, “Attend one Mass.” The Mass is more than a “church service” or an obligation to be checked off our “to do” list. The Mass is an encounter with Our Lord where we meet Him at the cross of Calvary. Therefore, we should prepare hearts intentionally. Lots of people probably feel that saying a simple prayer as they get settled in their pew is enough. Although such piety is praiseworthy, it would be more efficacious in merit to be even more intentional. For example, *go to Confession!* Even if you are not conscious of mortal sin, get into the habit of going regularly—why not monthly? The grace of the Sacrament of Confession helps to detach us from even the venial sins we commit. St. John Paul has said that without proper repentance, “partaking of the Eucharist would lack its full redeeming effectiveness” (*Redemptor Hominis*, 20). That’s powerful! In order to receive holy communion, we should have the proper disposition—meaning that our mind is recollected and focused upon what we are doing at Mass. Here is a short prayer you could memorize and say right before receiving holy communion. It is taken from the prayer before Mass written by St. Ambrose:

“May your body and blood, which I intend to receive, although I am unworthy, be for me the remission of my sins, the washing away of my guilt, the end of my evil thoughts, and the rebirth of my better instincts. May it incite me to do the works pleasing to you and profitable to my health in body and soul and be a firm defense against the wiles of my enemies.”

Life in the Eucharist: St. Peter Julian Eymard

Born in La Mure d’Isère in southeastern France, Peter Julian Eymard’s [pronounced A-mard] faith journey drew him from being a priest in the Diocese of Grenoble in 1834, to joining the Marists in 1839, to founding the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in 1856. Father Eymard was especially effective at preaching Eucharistic devotions, very popular at the time. It was on one such

occasion, on Corpus Christi, May 25, 1845, that he had a powerful experience that would change the course of his life. While carrying the Blessed Sacrament in procession at Saint Paul’s Church in Lyons, he felt an



intense attraction to Christ in the Eucharist and resolved to “bring all the world to the knowledge and love of our Lord; to preach nothing but Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Eucharistic.” The life of this Apostle of the Eucharist has inspired people around the world to live a more dynamic and transformative Eucharistic life by uniting regular participation in the Mass.

Adoro te Devote: The Preface

The *Preface* is considered as a sort of introduction to the Eucharistic Prayer. The word is derived from the combination of two Latin words: *prae* and *fatío* words spoken beforehand or “before the act,” and refers to the great works of the Eucharistic Prayer, center of the celebration of the Holy Mass. The preface begins just before the *Sanctus* (i.e. the Holy, holy) when the priest says, “The Lord be with you.” The word “Eucharist” means, “act of thanksgiving”, and this act of thanksgiving is clearly expressed in a special way in the preface. In Christ, the priest, in the holy name of the people, glorifies God the Father and gives Him thanks for the work of salvation or for one of these aspects in particular. “It is a poem, the cry of joy and recognition, the song of the world discovering its salvation, ...the certitude of faith making hope spring forth, as has to have been the prayer of Jesus on the night of Holy Thursday.”

