

Pope Francis on Eucharist

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100 Daily Meditations for
Adoration, Prayer, and Reflection

Compiled by
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Foreword by
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Foreword

As the universal Church engages in a synodal process and as the Church in the United States fosters a Eucharistic revival, we are blessed to have this collection of Pope Francis's meditations on the Eucharist.

A synodal Church, as the two Greek words *syn* (with) and *hodos* (road) tell us, is the assembly of believers who walk on the road together with their Lord. And surely when we come together to celebrate the Eucharist, we are never more with the Lord and on the journey with him. As Pope Francis says, "[I]n the Eucharist the Lord makes us walk on his road" (Day 10).

As Pope Francis describes our experience of the Eucharist, he identifies that experience as deeply personal. We receive the Lord within us, and we meet him. And although that experience is deeply personal, it is never merely private. It does not just belong to us. He writes: "The Eucharist is not a sacrament 'for me'; it is the sacrament of the many, who form one body, God's holy and faithful people" (Day 11).

The intense personal and shared experience of the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist, as Pope Francis describes it, is also not a static or fixed presence. It is, we believe, real sacramental presence. And it is also

a dynamic presence: we move with Jesus, and Jesus moves with us. Pope Francis says, “In the Eucharist Jesus . . . draws alongside us, pilgrims in history, to nourish the faith, hope and charity within us; to comfort us in trials, to sustain us in the commitment to justice and peace” (Day 65).

This personal, shared, and dynamic presence of the Lord finds echoes in one of the great Eucharistic hymns of our tradition, *Lauda Sion*, the sequence for the solemnity of Corpus Christi. In that hymn, we hear these memorable words:

*Ecce, panis angelorum,
Factus cibus viatorum:
Vere panis filiorum . . .*

Behold the Bread of angels,
Become the food of travelers:
Truly the bread of God’s children . . .

Each time we encounter the Lord in his Eucharist, we rejoice to know that he is with us who have become sons and daughters in the Son. He is with us on the journey that leads one day to the heavenly banquet.

As you pick up Pope Francis’s book of Eucharistic meditations, I hope that Pope Francis offers you a model for your prayer and encounter with the Eucharist. As you read his words, you will sense that he is doing what St. Thomas Aquinas described as *contemplata aliis tradere*, “handing on to others what we ourselves have contemplated.” Like Pope Francis, may you be able to contemplate deeply the mystery of our

Eucharistic Lord in his dying and rising, in his faithful presence to us, and in the ways he accompanies us on the journey. From your contemplation, may you be able to share, especially with a younger generation, what the Eucharist means to you, so that more and more people can embrace this great gift.

Another hope that I have for you, as you consider Pope Francis's words, centers on the connection and unity that we have with each other in the Eucharist. We live in a time of fragmentation, and so many people feel divided from one another. Pope Francis keeps reminding us that we are—in the words of St. Francis of Assisi—*fratelli tutti*, “brothers and sisters to each other.” The Eucharist is that strong center that holds us together. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:16-17). May the Eucharist lead you to know the unity and connection that we have with each other, with the men and women of faith who have gone before us, and—one day—with all the saints in heaven.

Finally, I hope that your consideration of Pope Francis's meditations will lead you to claim your Eucharistic responsibility. What do I mean? The Eucharist, as action, presence, sign and source of unity, pledge of our future, is never just about our own betterment. The Eucharist propels us into mission, that is, to take responsibility for carrying the Lord into the world. After the two disciples on the road to

Emmaus encountered the Lord, and he shared God's Word with them and then broke his Eucharistic bread with them, St. Luke says, "That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. . . . Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread" (Luke 24:33, 35). From their experience of Eucharist, they claimed their responsibility to go in mission to share the Lord with others. May your reflections and prayers centered on the Eucharist lead you on the same path.

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich
Feast of Saint Francis
October 4, 2022

Day 1

The Eucharist communicates the Lord's love for us: a love so great that it nourishes us with Himself; a freely given love, always available to every person who hungers and needs to regenerate his own strength. To live the experience of faith means to allow oneself to be nourished by the Lord and to build one's own existence not with material goods but with the reality that does not perish: the gifts of God, his Word and his Body.

(Homily – June 19, 2014)

Day 2

To listen to Christ, in fact, entails *taking up the logic of his Pascal Mystery*, setting out on the journey with Him to make of oneself a gift of love to others, in docile obedience to the will of God, with an attitude of detachment from worldly things and of interior freedom.

(Angelus – March 1, 2015)

Day 3

In the Eucharist, we in fact encounter the living Jesus and His strength, and through Him we enter into communion with our brothers and sisters in the faith: those who live with us here on earth and those who have gone before us into the next life, the unending life. This reality fills us with joy: it is beautiful to have so many brothers and sisters in the faith who walk beside us, supporting us with their help, and together we travel the same road toward heaven. And it is comforting to know that there are other brothers and sisters who have already reached heaven, who await us and pray for us, so that together in eternity we can contemplate the glorious and merciful face of the Father.

(Angelus – November 1, 2014)

Day 4

We all go to Mass because we love Jesus and we want to share, through the Eucharist, in his passion and his resurrection.

But do we love, as Jesus wishes, those brothers and sisters who are the most needy? For example, in Rome these days we have seen much social discomfort either due to the rain, which has caused so much damage to entire districts, or because of the lack of work, a consequence of the global economic crisis.

I wonder, and each one of us should wonder: I who go to Mass, how do I live this? Do I try to help, to approach and pray for those in difficulty? Or am I a little indifferent?

(General Audience – February 12, 2014)