



THE MASS IS A HOLY MEAL

Parents/guardians, as you are careful about what your children eat, make sure that they are nourished by the Bread of Life.

The night before Jesus died, at his “Last Supper,” he gathered with his apostles to celebrate the Passover meal. The Passover meal recalls the event of the Exodus, during which the Israelites (Jews) were freed from slavery in Egypt. God instructed the Israelites to slaughter a lamb, sprinkle the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their homes and then eat the lamb for dinner. Through this meal, the Israelites were protected from death and freed from slavery.

At the “Last Supper,” when it came time to say the customary prayers over the bread and wine, Jesus did something dramatic. He took the bread, blessed it and gave it to his apostles and said, “This is my body.” He took the chalice of wine, blessed it and said, “This is my blood.” Then he instructed his apostles to continue to do the same thing in memory of him.

The Mass that Catholics celebrate today is traced to the Last Supper. The Mass is a festive meal. The altar is a table with linen covering and candles. Songs are sung. Conversation takes place

between the priest and the people. We share stories (readings from the Bible).

Bread and wine are consecrated and become the Body and Blood of Jesus. He is the new Passover Lamb whose blood protects us and frees us from sin and death. The food that is served is Jesus himself, under the form of bread and wine.

To receive Holy Communion, we should fast from food or drink for at least one hour. If we are conscious of a mortal or serious sin, we must receive the Sacrament of Penance prior to receiving Holy Communion. When circumstances prevent us from receiving Holy Communion, it is possible to make a “Spiritual Communion.” We should prayerfully worship Jesus, present in his Body and Blood, and express our love for Jesus and others. Catholics are obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season.

For Discussion

Food and drink nourish our bodies. How does Holy Communion nourish our souls?

January 1, 2012	Luke 2:16-21	What is your favorite prayer to the Blessed Mother? Why?
January 8, 2012 The Epiphany of Our Lord	Matthew 2:1-12	What treasures will you offer to Jesus, the newborn King?
January 15, 2012 Second Sunday in Ordinary Time	John 1:35-42	How do you invite your friends to be good Christians and followers of Christ?
January 22, 2012 Third Sunday in Ordinary Time	1 Corinthians 7:29-31	Who are the people in your life who have helped you to turn away from sin and live a good life?
January 29, 2012 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	1 Corinthians 7:32-35	What worries are bothering you? How can you give them over to Jesus?