

## Session 6 of 8 | Until the End of the Age

# Do This Until He Comes

*The Eucharist and Christ's one sacrifice*

*Was the Eucharist a meal for one night in an upper room, or a gift entrusted to the Church until Christ returns?*

## Part One: Leader Preparation Guide

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### Session Overview

**Discovery Aim.** The group discovers that Paul hands the Eucharist on to a church that was not at the Last Supper, that he ties it to Christ's return, that he treats it as a real participation in Christ's Body and Blood, and that the Mass makes present one sacrifice without repeating it.

**Catholic Touchstone.** Christ's command "Do this" is addressed to the Apostles and their successors. In the Mass the one sacrifice of the cross is made present, not repeated. Christ is truly, really, and substantially present, and the ministerial priesthood serves his one priesthood. (CCC 1341; 1366-1367; 1374-1376; 1544-1547.)

### What You Need to Know

This session has the most direct evidence in the whole study. Paul writes to Corinthians who were not in the upper room. He tells them, "I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you," and then gives them the institution narrative. Something is being received and handed on, in the same vocabulary we met in 2 Timothy 2:2 and will meet again in Session 7. And Paul ties the celebration to the future: "you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." A gift meant for the first recipients only does not get an "until."

Paul does not treat the meal as ordinary. In 1 Corinthians 10 the cup and the bread are a "participation" in the Blood and Body of Christ. In chapter 11 eating and drinking unworthily makes a person "guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord." The Church teaches that the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially present, and that by consecration the whole substance of bread and wine becomes his Body and Blood while their appearances remain. The Church calls that change transubstantiation. It is not produced by the assembly's faith or feelings. (CCC 1374-1376.)

Hebrews is not the enemy of the Mass, and the group should hear that from you before anyone else says it. Hebrews teaches that Christ offered himself "once for all" and that his priesthood "continues for ever." The Catholic teaching is built on both truths. The Mass does not add a second sacrifice beside Calvary and does not crucify Christ again. It makes the one sacrifice present, with the same Victim and the same Priest, offered now in an unbloody, sacramental manner. Ordained priests do not replace a priest who has stopped acting. They serve Christ's one, permanent priesthood. (CCC 1367; 1544-1545.)

The Passover is the frame. God commanded Israel to keep the night of deliverance as "a memorial day" forever. In the Bible a memorial is not a mental exercise. It is a rite by which a saving event is made present to a later generation. Luke places the Last Supper inside that Passover setting. Read Exodus 12 with the group so they hear "memorial" the way Jesus' disciples did. (CCC 1334; 1340; 1363.)

## Terms, in plain words

- **Memorial (anamnesis):** in Scripture, a rite that makes a past saving act present to those who celebrate it, not merely a reminder of it.
- **Transubstantiation:** the Church's word for the change of the whole substance of bread and wine into Christ's Body and Blood, while the appearances remain (CCC 1376).
- **Real Presence:** Christ present in the Eucharist truly, really, and substantially, body, blood, soul, and divinity.
- **Unbloody:** the manner in which the one sacrifice is offered in the Mass, without a new death.

## Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

**Exodus 12:1-14.** The lamb, the blood, the meal eaten in haste, and the command: "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD... for ever." A commanded memorial, kept by generations who were not in Egypt, by which the deliverance becomes theirs. Luke explicitly sets the Last Supper in this Passover frame (Luke 22:15).

Keep this distinction | leader only

Never describe the Mass as a new crucifixion or an additional sacrifice alongside Calvary. Only a validly ordained bishop or priest consecrates the Eucharist (CCC 1411). The common priesthood of the baptized is real and does not confer that power (CCC 1547). Keep the one sacrifice, the one Priest, and the two distinct participations in his priesthood all in view.

## Voices of the Church

### St. Justin Martyr

**Summary:** Justin, writing around 155, says Christians do not receive the Eucharist as common bread or common drink. They receive it as the flesh and blood of the Jesus who was made flesh, changed by the word of prayer that comes from him. He then describes the Sunday assembly: readings from the apostles and prophets, a homily, prayers, the bringing of bread and wine, thanksgiving, and communion, with deacons carrying it to the absent.

*First Apology, 66-67*

### St. Ignatius of Antioch

**Summary:** Ignatius, around 107, says certain heretics abstain from the Eucharist because they do not confess that it is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins. He adds that the Eucharist is to be celebrated by the bishop or by one the bishop entrusts. Real Presence and ordered ministry appear together in his letter.

*Letter to the Smyrnaeans, 7-8*

**Catechism of the Catholic Church**

**Summary:** The command of Jesus to repeat his actions and words "until he comes" asks more than remembering him. It is directed at the liturgical celebration, by the Apostles and their successors, of the memorial of Christ, of his life, death, resurrection, and intercession with the Father.

CCC 1341

**Catechism Connection**

- **CCC 1334; 1340.** Passover background, and the Last Supper as the definitive Passover.
- **CCC 1341.** The command "Do this" addressed to the Apostles and their successors.
- **CCC 1363-1367.** Memorial in the biblical sense; the Mass and the cross are one single sacrifice.
- **CCC 1374-1376.** The Real Presence and transubstantiation.
- **CCC 1411.** Only validly ordained priests can consecrate.
- **CCC 1544-1547.** Christ's one priesthood and the two participations in it.

**Session Goals**

1. Follow the Eucharist from the upper room to Corinth to "until he comes."
2. Distinguish a biblical memorial from a mental reminder, and the Real Presence from a symbol in the mind.
3. Explain why the Mass does not repeat the crucifixion, using Hebrews rather than against it.

**Thread Watch | leader only**

Thread B, "received and handed on," is the spine tonight. Paul uses the very words in 1 Corinthians 11:23. Thread A returns in the Leader Only box: the baptized share the offering; only the ordained consecrate. Do not open the guesses. Session 7 will turn the handed-on vocabulary into a session of its own.

**Timed Plan | 75 to 90 minutes**

| Clock    | Segment                                          | If you only have 60                               |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 0 to 8   | Opening prayer and Win                           | One Win question                                  |
| 8 to 28  | Build, Questions 1 and 2                         | Keep                                              |
| 28 to 48 | Build, Questions 3 to 5, with the live discovery | Drop Question 5. Assign Hebrews 10:10-14 for home |
| 48 to 60 | The objection, built then pressed                | Keep                                              |
| 60 to 70 | Send and Live It This Week                       | One Send question                                 |
| 70 to 75 | Memory verse and closing prayer                  | Keep                                              |

*For 90 minutes, let the Build discussion breathe and add the Dig Deeper passage at the end.*

**OBJECTION BENCH | leader only. Answers for questions that may come up. Do not read aloud.**

**If someone says:** *Hebrews 7:24 says Christ's priesthood is untransferable. So there can be no other priests.*

**You can answer:** Agreed, and Catholic teaching says the same: Christ's priesthood is unique and is not passed to anyone (CCC 1545). The ministerial priesthood is a participation in his priesthood, not a transfer of it. That is why a priest says "This is my body," not "This is Christ's body." Christ is the one speaking.

**If someone says:** *Jesus said "do this in remembrance of me." Remembrance means remember. It is a memorial, not a sacrifice.*

**You can answer:** Read Exodus 12 and ask what "memorial" meant to the men at that table. Israel did not "remember" the Passover by thinking about it. They kept a rite that made the deliverance theirs. The Church uses the word the way Scripture does (CCC 1363). And Paul says the cup is a participation in Christ's Blood, which is a strong word for a reminder.

**If someone says:** *Transubstantiation is a medieval word. Justin and Ignatius never heard of it.*

**You can answer:** True. The word was fixed in the thirteenth century to name what the Church had always confessed (CCC 1376). Ignatius in 107 says the Eucharist is the flesh of Christ that suffered for us, and Justin in 155 says it is not common bread. The word came later; the faith it names did not.

**If someone says:** *If the Mass is a sacrifice, then Christ is being killed over and over.*

**You can answer:** No. The Church rejects that as firmly as you do. Christ died once, and Hebrews is right. The Mass makes that one sacrifice present, with the same Victim and Priest, in an unbloody manner (CCC 1367). Nothing is repeated. Something is made present.

## Answers at a Glance

*One line per question, for the leader who needs to check quickly during the night. Full answers are in Part Two.*

1. Luke 22: "This is my body... Do this." A gift given, then a command to keep doing it.
2. 1 Corinthians 11: received, delivered, proclaimed "until he comes." Handed on to people who were not there.
3. 1 Corinthians 10: cup and bread are a participation in Blood and Body. One bread, one body. Real presence, real communion.
4. Exodus 12: a memorial kept forever by people who were not in Egypt. Memorial means made present.
5. Hebrews 10: once for all. The Mass does not repeat; it makes present. Same Victim, same Priest, unbloody manner.

## Part Two: Discussion Guide

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*Read aloud everything marked SAY, ASK, and READ. Keep everything marked LEADER to yourself. Share each parchment box only after the group has talked.*

### Opening Prayer

**SAY** Lord Jesus, deepen our faith in the gift of your Body and Blood. Help us hear your word with reverence and come to your altar with gratitude, repentance, and love. Amen.

### Win | Begin with experience

**LEADER** Invite brief responses. Anyone may pass. Take one question if time is short.

**ASK 1.** How can a shared meal say more than "here is food"?

**ASK 2.** What helps you prepare for something sacred instead of going through it on autopilot?

### Build | Let the text lead

**READ** Read Luke 22:14-20.

**ASK 1.** What does Jesus give the Apostles, and what does he tell them to do with it afterward? Where does Luke set the meal?

**LEADER** Verse 15 sets it at Passover. Verse 19 has the command.

#### ANSWER | share after the discussion

Jesus gives his Body and his Blood, "the new covenant in my blood," inside a Passover meal he "earnestly desired" to eat with them. Then he commands: "Do this in remembrance of me." The gift comes from him before it becomes the Church's worship. Catholic teaching hears "remembrance" the way the men at that table would have heard it, as a Passover memorial: a rite that makes the saving act present, not a private recollection. (CCC 1340-1341; 1363.)

**READ** Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.

**ASK 2.** What is Paul handing on, and to whom? How far into the future does he extend it? What does his warning tell us about what the meal is?

**LEADER** Have the group find the words "received" and "delivered" in verse 23 and "until he comes" in verse 26.

#### ANSWER | share after the discussion

"I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you." Paul hands the institution of the Eucharist to a church that was not in the upper room, in the vocabulary of tradition. And he extends it forward: "as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." A gift for one night does not come with an "until."

His warning matters too. Eating and drinking unworthily makes a person "guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord." You cannot profane a symbol. Christ's gift was meant for the continuing Church, and Paul treats it as what Jesus said it was.

**READ** Read 1 Corinthians 10:16-17.

**ASK 3.** What does Paul say we participate in? How does that participation connect to the Church's unity?

**ANSWER | share after the discussion**

The cup is "a participation in the blood of Christ" and the bread "a participation in the body of Christ." Then: "we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." The Church teaches that Christ is truly present, not present only as a symbol in our thoughts. Because the presence is real, communion with Christ in the Eucharist is inseparable from communion with his Body, the Church. (CCC 1374-1376; 1396.)

**Live Discovery**

**SAY** Find the institution of the Passover in Exodus. Look for the command that the day be kept as a memorial, and read the whole account around it.

**LEADER** Allow a short search. Supply Exodus 12:1-14 only if the group is stuck. Then have someone read the passage the group found.

**ASK 4.** What is Israel commanded to keep, for how long, and who keeps it? What does "memorial" mean here?

**ANSWER | share after the discussion**

Israel is to keep the Passover "as a memorial day... throughout your generations... for ever." The people who keep it were not in Egypt, yet the deliverance becomes theirs through the rite. That is what a biblical memorial is: not a thought about the past but a celebration that makes God's saving act present to a new generation. Jesus gave his memorial inside this Passover. The Church has never reduced it to a reminder. (CCC 1363-1364.)

**READ** Read Hebrews 10:10-14.

**SAY** This is the passage most often quoted against the Mass. We read it because we agree with it.

**ASK 5.** What does Hebrews insist on? What does that forbid us from saying about the Mass, and what does the Church actually say?

**ANSWER | share after the discussion**

Hebrews insists that Christ's offering was made "once for all" and that "by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified." That forbids any idea of a new sacrifice beside Calvary or a repeated death. The Church says exactly that: the Mass does not add another crucifixion. It makes the one sacrifice present, with the same Victim and the same Priest, offered now in an unbloody, sacramental manner. One sacrifice, made present, not repeated. (CCC 1366-1367.)

**A Serious Objection | build it, then press it**

**SAY** Now the objection at full strength. It is made by serious Christians who love the Lord's Supper.

**THE OBJECTION | read aloud**

*"Paul clearly teaches a continuing memorial meal. Every Christian church has one. But a memorial is a remembrance, and 'do this in remembrance of me' means what it says. Nothing here requires transubstantiation, a word no one used for twelve hundred years."*

*"And the sacrifice language is worse. Hebrews could not be clearer: once for all, a single offering, perfected for all time. Any priest offering Christ on an altar, week after week, is saying the cross was not enough. Either the cross finished it or it did not."*

**ASK** What can we establish from the command to continue and from Paul's own words? Does the Church's teaching set the Mass against Hebrews, or read it with Hebrews? And what did the first Christians think they were receiving?

**LEADER** *Let the group try to answer from the passages read tonight before you share the response. Do not rescue the discussion too early.*

**CATHOLIC RESPONSE | share after the discussion**

The command to continue is one piece of the evidence, not the whole doctrine, and the objection is right that "do this" alone does not prove transubstantiation. But Paul does not leave it alone. He calls the cup a participation in Christ's Blood and warns that unworthy reception profanes the Lord's Body. Those are not words for a symbol. Ignatius in 107 says the Eucharist is the flesh of Christ that suffered for us; Justin in 155 says it is not common bread. The word transubstantiation came in the thirteenth century to name what the Church had confessed since the first, and the Church says so (CCC 1376).

On Hebrews, the Church agrees with every word. Christ died once, and the cross finished it. The Mass is not a second sacrifice or a repeated death, and a priest who thought so would be wrong. The Mass makes the one, finished sacrifice present to us, with the same Victim and Priest, in an unbloody manner, so that its fruits reach us now. Hebrews itself says Christ's priesthood continues for ever and that he always lives to intercede. In the Eucharist, Christ exercises his one permanent priesthood sacramentally in the Church. Ordained priests serve his priesthood; they do not replace it. (CCC 1341; 1367; 1545.)

**Send | Respond personally**

**ASK 1.** What would help you take part in Mass with more attention and more faith?

**ASK 2.** How would you explain the Eucharist to a friend without saying either "it is only a reminder" or "Christ is crucified again"?

**Live It This Week**

**Prepare.** Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 before Mass this week and make a sincere examination of conscience.

**Pray.** Spend a few quiet minutes after Communion thanking Jesus for his self-gift. If you are unsure whether you can receive, ask a priest before Sunday.

**Give.** Choose one concrete act of self-giving service this week as a response to what Christ gives you.

### Scripture Memory

*“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.”*

1 Corinthians 11:26 (RSV2CE)

### Closing Prayer

**SAY** Lord Jesus, you give yourself for the life of the world. Teach us to worship with reverence and to live with generous love. Draw your people into deeper communion with you. Amen.

## Part Three: Leader Reference Card

*Every passage used tonight, in the order it appears. Materials: RSV2CE Bibles for everyone, this guide, and the Take-Home sheets to hand out at the end.*

| When   | Passage                | Purpose                                 |
|--------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1      | Luke 22:14-20          | Institution inside the Passover         |
| 2      | 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 | Received, delivered, "until he comes"   |
| 3      | 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 | Participation and unity                 |
| 4      | Exodus 12:1-14         | Live discovery: a memorial kept forever |
| 5      | Hebrews 10:10-14       | Once for all, made present not repeated |
| Memory | 1 Corinthians 11:26    | Until he comes                          |

### Dig Deeper | Hebrews 7:23-25

Christ "holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever," and "always lives to make intercession." Read it with CCC 1544-1545. The ministerial priesthood is a participation in Christ's one permanent priesthood, never a replacement for it. If Christ's priesthood is permanent and active, ask where it acts. The Catholic answer includes the altar, where Christ exercises it sacramentally.

### After the meeting

Hand out Take-Home 6. Do not distribute this answer-bearing leader guide as a participant workbook.