

“Eucharist” in the *FUN Manual*

This identification of the Church, and therefore its members, with Christ is found in Acts 9: 4 (“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”), and is grounded in our baptism (Romans 6: 3-5). We are quite literally “christened”—Christened. This identification with Christ is nurtured in many ways, mostly notably through our celebration of the Eucharist: when preparing wine for the Consecration, ~~(the priest says a prayer: “Through the mingling of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of him who humbled himself to share in our humanity.”~~ This is incorrectly quoted in the *FUN Manual*) [the deacon or priest says a prayer: “By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.” These are the actual words from the *Roman Missal*] St. Irenaeus said, in the second century, “. . . our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, . . . become what we are, that he might bring us to be even what He is Himself,” and St. Athanasius said, in the fourth century, “He was made man so we might be made God.” Through our baptism and the Eucharist, we are divinized (the Eastern Church calls this theosis, divinization), we “become God by participation.” St. Augustine would say, as he gave out the Eucharist, “Receive what you are, and become what you receive.” [*Basic Catholic Doctrine -3-23-2011, page 12 of 24*]



Baptism brings us into the Community; the Eucharist nourishes us and transforms us just as certainly as the Bread and Wine are transformed. [*Basic Catholic Doctrine -3-23-2011, page 16 of 24*]

God has freely chosen incarnation (taking on human form) before the human choice for sin. Jesus Christ comes to us because God loves us, not because we sin. Because of sin, Jesus comes in a particular way out of free will, not because a particular method of human behavior is needed to save us. God can simply will salvation, because God is always free. Christ chooses to be with us physically now through the Eucharist until he comes again. This is reflective of God’s willingness to be with us in humble ways and to nourish us physically and spiritually. [*Franciscan Theology, Tradition and Spirituality – 4-12-2011, page 16 of 30*]

Francis does not write about or focus on the Cross, which is most unusual for Medieval theology and in many cases today’s theology. Francis instead continues to dwell on God’s poverty and humility and desire to remain with us, hidden within the Eucharist. The Eucharist is God’s action to continue to love and nourish us, giving us Himself, in the poorest and humblest form of food, bread and wine, (our food and drink.) [*Francis and his approach to Divinity – 3-23-2011, page 9 of 16*]

For Francis, as in the Creed of the Church, the Christ-event is lived practically in its entirety in everyday life. Jesus’ life emphasizes for us all, the supreme expression of the love of God and reveals in his total offering of himself through his death on the cross, that his own essence and being are inseparable from the Father. [*Francis and his approach to Divinity – 3-23-2011, page 9 of 16*]

For this reason, the Eucharist has particular importance for Francis (a supreme concrete expression of the love of the Father for his creatures and of the revelation of his essence), in which the true encounter with God and his creation is achieved in all dimensions of existence, human and spiritual (“ . . . the Spirit of the Lord, who lives in his faithful, is He who receives the most holy Body and the Blood of the Lord” and “. . . in such a way the Lord is always present with his faithful . . . ”, Admonition I). [*Francis and his approach to Divinity – 3-23-2011, page 9 of 16*]

Because of the Eucharist Francis held a special reverence for priests everywhere, not based on their worthiness, but on their faculty to make the presence of Jesus real in the Eucharist. This special gift of “understanding” established the church as a basic value, and he recognized that there is no Church without the Body of Christ, and there is no Body of Christ if there are no priests. It also recognizes that this Church is not composed only of clergymen: it is the people of God in all their functions and social conditions. It is this reality of Church stemming from the Eucharist that causes Francis to place all parts of his spiritual family at the service of the Church, to carry out the mission of proclaiming the Gospel. [*Francis and his approach to Divinity – 3-23-2011, page 9 of 16*]

Francis is totally focused on Jesus and unceasingly contemplates Jesus’ total giving of Himself (kenosis) in the Incarnation; in the Manger, on the Cross, and in the Eucharist. [*Vocation, Charism and Mission of the Secular Franciscan Order 3-23-2011, page 14 of 20*]

There is a particular spiritual style for those who are Franciscans. We will address this life style briefly because it is covered in other places during formation. The following are some characteristics that are found in a person who is called to be a Franciscan. These can help us discern if we have an authentic Franciscan vocation: *A very intense Eucharistic spirituality (Seeing Christ present in the Eucharist and the ideal of self giving like Jesus did and continues to do in the Eucharist). [*Vocation 3-23-2011, page 11 of 18*]

This FRANCISCAN WAY requires:

- following Jesus without reservations in the footsteps of Saint Francis. In other words, to be ready, in our specific state of life, to follow Jesus just as Francis did.
- to discover, accept and develop within ourselves the same Charism received by Saint Francis, make it present and bring it to fruition in the world.

This spiritual “style” entails:

- a very intense *Eucharistic spirituality* (kenosis = self-emptying)
- a very strong *fraternal communion – mutual equality*
- *simplicity*
- love of *poverty*
- *humility*
- a genuine sense of *minority, or littleness – seeking to serve and not be served*
- a complete and active abandonment to God, which is demonstrated by *obedience*, particularly to the Church.



To have an Authentic Franciscan Vocation means to desire to embrace these attitudes and behaviors that characterize our form of life; this charism-mission, this spirituality. [*Vocation, Charism and Mission of the Secular Franciscan Order 3-23-2011, page 8 of 20*]

Because Profession (permanent commitment) is an act of personal consecration, both public and ecclesial, the preferred celebration takes place in the context of the Mass and celebration of the Eucharist. [*For the Formator 3-23-2011, page 25 of 26*]

The connection between the act/event of Profession and the dynamic of the Eucharist are very clear. These two sacrifices – that of Christ the priest and that of the newly-Professed – are lives offered to God and they are made real at one and the same time. (*Profession 3-23-2011, page 9 of 18.*)

[*Designed by Deacon Dave & Thérèse Ream, O.F.S., Revised July 2017*]