EUCHARIST28
SYDNEY

Catechetical Resource

The Eucharist and Everlasting *Life*

The Good News is that our Risen Lord Jesus Christ calls us to participate in his eternal life right now during our life on earth.

This points to the other name for the Eucharist which is "Communion" that means being 'united' *in Christ*. All of creation is created *in Christ*, which means that God holds everything in existence and is the source and giver of all life.

When Jesus was asked a question about what happens when we die, he replied, "God is a God of the living not of the dead." He said this because he wanted us to know the truth about the 'resurrection' – about being 'raised up' and freed from death to enjoy everlasting life.



In the last book in the Bible called the Book of Revelation, God also wants us to know that there will be a new heaven and a new earth "where all tears will be wiped away; there will be no more death and no more mourning or sadness or pain" (See Revelation, Chapter 21).

Jesus' own resurrection from being dead shows us what will happen to us.

Jesus wants to give us everlasting life like he has. This is why he said, "I am the true Vine and you are the branches" to explain that he wants his everlasting life to flow into us so we can live like him forever.

This is why Jesus also said, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." (John 6:54)

This also means Jesus wants us to have the same kind of resurrected body he has, which will be amazing. Remember, the Risen Jesus was able to eat and drink and also appear wherever he liked!

Now, in heaven, there is no sin that causes sadness, because God is good and will cleanse us of any sins or bad habits that we might still have so we can be like God – "we will all be changed, in a moment, in the

twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

The name we use for this 'clean change' is purgatory that comes from the word purge which means to get rid of or let go of something that is not needed. It also makes up part of the word purification which means to be made pure or 100% good like God.

To help understand this, here is a story about not having mud for dinner!

Some children went into their backyard and made a huge mudpuddle in the middle of the garden. They became muddy all over. When their father called them inside to have dinner, they were too muddy to go inside and could not get all the mud off by themselves. So, their father and mother helped them by washing all the mud off and gave them clean clothes to put on so that they could join the rest of the family for dinner.

This is what purgatory is like – it is being loved by God so much that God raises us up and cleans us to be able to then enjoy being with all of God's family at the banquet of eternal life. Our prayers for one another also help with this 'clean-up operation'!

There is a saint called Monica who reminds us to trust in Jesus' words, "I will raise them up at the last day," and the importance of being members of God's family that spans heaven and earth.

When Saint Monica became ill and was about to die, she was away from her home travelling with her two sons. She told them not to worry about having to bury her body away from their home. Saint Monica said, "I simply ask you to remember me at the Lord's altar wherever you are!" Sharing in the Eucharist, we become more fully members of the Body of Christ, the Church; and we become more fully present to one another – "wherever we are".

Saint Monica reminds us to pray for the living and those who have died and passed over into God's care when we are united with Jesus in the Eucharist at Mass. As the Catechism says, "The Eucharistic sacrifice is also offered for the faithful departed who "have died in Christ but are not yet wholly purified," so that they may be able to enter into the light and peace of Christ." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1371)

