



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Father Robert Barron's in-depth study on the Eucharist, the "source and summit of the Christian life." [CCC 1324] Over the course of this study, we will examine three important aspects of this inexhaustibly rich Sacrament: the Eucharist as sacred meal, as sacrifice, and as real presence. These elements unite the Church across time and unite us to our fellow Catholics in every sacred liturgy.

This guide is designed to help you apply to your life what you will learn from Fr. Barron's look at the Catholic Tradition. The aim is to help you study, reflect upon and act in obedience to the will of God in Christ. You will have the chance to dig into the Catholic Tradition and grapple with Scripture and the Church's teaching as it is summarized in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. You will also be able to use the materials provided in Fr. Barron's presentation in order to assess and enhance your life as a disciple of Jesus Christ. The core of each guide is the QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING and the QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION, which will reinforce the main points made in each section of Fr. Barron's presentation on the different aspects of the Eucharist..

Throughout the study, you will be asked to reference different Bible verses and passages. We recommend the *New American Bible* or the *Revised Standard Version*, or you can also use another acceptable Catholic translation. To answer the questions, you will need to refer to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which can be purchased at your local bookstore or found online at: www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm.

To begin, let us listen to Father Barron's introductory remarks on the beauty and importance of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Pay attention to Father's warning against indifference toward this essential reality of our Faith, and let yourself be drawn into the depth of its meaning. Then, consider the questions on the following pages.

QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. Read *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) 1324-1327. What does it mean to say that the Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life”? What do we mean by “source,” and what do we mean by “summit”?

2. Read CCC 1328, 1359-1361. What is the meaning of the word “eucharist”?



3. Now, read Philippians 2: 5-8 and CCC 1362-64. In receiving the Eucharist and understanding the meaning of the word, for what are we “grateful”? How does the reception of the Eucharist in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass express this gratitude?

4. Read CCC 1329-1332 about the other common names for the Eucharist. List some of those names and their meanings.



5. Read I Corinthians 10: 16-17 and Romans 12: 4-5. How does the way we participate in the Body and Blood of Christ during the Mass define who we are as we exit church?

6. Read Luke 22: 17-20 and CCC 1342 & 1345. Father Barron, in his book *Eucharist*, says that “Throughout the long history of the church, throughout the whole series of dramatic successes and failures, despite the stupidity and wickedness of so many Christians, the command, ‘Do this in memory of me’ has been and continues to be obeyed.”^[1] What does this say about the role of the Eucharist in the life of the Church throughout history? In other words, how are we a “Eucharistic people”?

[1] Barron, Robert. *Eucharist* (2007, Orbis Books, NY), pg. 10.

7. In *Eucharist*, Father Barron says, "...the biblical imagination is not dualist, but sacramental. Though the world is other than God, the world serves as an icon of the one who made it, and therefore, whatever is good, true, and beautiful in creation functions as a point of contact between human beings and God." [1] How does a feast (like the one in *Babette's Feast* that Father Barron describes in his book, available in the online resources) point the participants to an experience of God? How does this idea keep us from assuming that we must be completely separated from the joys of the world (dualist)? What does this tell us about the nature of God and what he desires for his creation?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Father Barron tells of his experience as a Eucharistic minister at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, saying that he had the distinct feeling that he was distributing the Eucharist to people who were "starving for it." Have you, during a prescribed fast or otherwise, ever felt as if you were "starving"? How did it feel when you were finally able to eat? Have you ever been starving for the Eucharist? What was it like when you were able to partake in the Sacrament? What are the similarities and differences in those two experiences?

[1] Barron, Robert. *Eucharist* (2007, Orbis Books, NY), pg. 21.



2. Read the description of the meal presented in the movie *Babette's Feast* in the excerpt from Fr. Barron's *Eucharist* book that is provided in the online support materials. Have you ever hosted or participated in a feast like the one described? As the host, what was your motivation for having the feast? As a guest, what was memorable about the experience, and how did you feel toward the host?

3. How is Babette Christ-like? In what distinct ways does she empty herself in love for her guests? In what concrete ways can you participate in even greater generosity and humility in seemingly ordinary situations?