

The Mystery of Faith: Encountering Jesus Christ in the Eucharist



A Pastoral Letter from Bishop Anthony Randazzo
to the Community of the Church of Broken Bay.

2025



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Cover image: 13th century fresco of the Eucharist with Christ, Virgin and Saints, known as the Mass of St. Michael, formerly in the church of St. Michele in Monza, Italy. Queen Theodolinda of the Lombards in crown and scarlet robe next to the Virgin Mary.

Introduction	7
1. The Mystery of Faith	9
2. Jesus Christ is Truly Present in the Eucharist	13
3. The Gift that Remains: Jesus' Enduring Presence in the Eucharist	15
4. One Bread, One Chalice: Receiving the Lord in the Heart of the Mass	17
5. Prepare the Way: Receiving Christ Worthily in the Eucharist	21
6. Called to Communion: Renewing Our Eucharistic Practice	25
7. Receiving the Body of Christ: A Sacred Encounter	29
8. A Cup of Blessing: The Return of Holy Communion from the Chalice	33
Conclusion	36
Appendix I	39
Appendix II	40
Appendix III	42
Pastoral Note	43

Introduction

In 2028, the Catholic Church in Australia will be blessed to host the 54th International Eucharistic Congress in Sydney. This momentous occasion will draw the attention of the global Church to our shores and invite us into a deeper encounter with the central mystery of our faith: the Most Holy Eucharist. It offers a profound opportunity, not only to celebrate, but to renew our understanding, appreciation, and lived experience of the Eucharist, which is the source and summit of the Christian life.

As the People of God in the Diocese of Broken Bay, we are being called to prepare our hearts for this historic event. The journey toward the Congress is not merely a timeline on the calendar; it is a spiritual pilgrimage. It is timely, therefore, that we take this moment to pause and reflect upon our own participation in the Eucharist, how it forms us, nourishes us, and sends us forth as disciples of Jesus Christ.

This Pastoral Letter is offered to all the faithful of our local Church: to our clergy, our consecrated religious, our parish and faith communities, families, and individuals, each of you who are living members of the Body of Christ. As your Bishop, I offer this letter as a companion along the way, a means of prayerfully drawing us deeper into the sacred mystery we celebrate at every Mass.

The Bishops of the Second Vatican Council, in their wisdom and vision for a regenerated and revitalised Church, reminded us that the faithful must be led to a “fully conscious and active participation” in the liturgy.¹ This invitation is not simply about external gestures, standing, sitting, singing, or responding at the right times. It is about allowing the Eucharist to shape our hearts and our lives. It is about bringing all that we are, our sorrows and joys, our sins and thanksgiving, and uniting them with the offering of bread and wine, which, through the power of the Holy Spirit, become for us the Body and Blood of Christ.

I invite each of you, the clergy and people of Broken Bay, to enter more deeply into this reflection. What does it truly mean to be a Eucharistic people? How does the Mass form us

¹ Sacrosanctum Concilium, 14.

to live the Gospel? How are we being called to become the Body of Christ for the world, a world that longs for peace, mercy, justice, and love?

I ask that you read this letter with openness and hope. Allow the life-giving Spirit of God to animate your heart. May our participation in the Eucharist nourish us by Word and Sacrament, strengthen us in holiness,

and send us forth to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to a world in need.

As we journey together toward the Eucharistic Congress of 2028, may we grow in wonder at the gift of the Eucharist and renew our commitment to be, in all we say and do, a people formed and sent by the Eucharistic Lord.

1. The Mystery of Faith

I invite you to reflect with me on the profound mystery at the heart of our faith: the Eucharist. Saint Paul, in his First Letter to the Corinthians, gives us a powerful insight into what we do every time we come to the altar. He writes:

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a fellowship in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a fellowship in the body of Christ? As there is one bread, so we, though many, are one body, for we all share in the one bread.”²

These words express something deeply sacred: the Eucharist is not just a symbol or a ritual. It is a real participation, a fellowship, into the very life of Christ. We are drawn into communion not only with Jesus but also with each other, becoming one body in Christ.

But let us be clear: the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass is more than merely a prayer. The Eucharistic Prayer is certainly at the heart of the celebration, but it is not simply a beautiful set of words. It is the verbal element within a sacred action, an action instituted by Christ himself at the Last Supper.³

At that Last Supper, Jesus showed us how the New Covenant would

be sealed, not with the blood of animals, but with His own Body and Blood. And it is this sacrifice we celebrate and make present in every Mass. We do not merely remember an event; we are drawn into it. As the Church teaches, in the words of the liturgy, we are engaged in “*the work of our redemption.*”⁴

This is why the Mass is both Word and Sacrament. We begin by listening attentively to the Word of God, which prepares our hearts and minds. This is not just a reading of sacred texts, but a proclamation of God’s living voice. It is a necessary preparation for what follows, our participation in the Eucharist, the source and summit of the Christian life.⁵

² 1 Corinthians 10:16–17.

³ cf Raymond Moloney, SJ, *Our Eucharistic Prayers in Worship, Preaching & Study*, p.13.

⁴ cf *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 2.

⁵ cf *Lumen gentium*, 11. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1324.

And this sacred action comes to its fullest expression when we approach the altar to receive Holy Communion, when we partake, worthily, in the very Body and Blood of Christ. In that moment, heaven touches earth. We are united with Christ's perfect sacrifice, and through him, we offer our lives to the Father.

We are reminded of this deeper reality:

*"The Eucharist, the sacrament of our salvation accomplished by Christ on the cross, is also a sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for the work of creation. In the Eucharistic sacrifice the whole of creation loved by God is presented to the Father through the death and the Resurrection of Christ."*⁶

In the Eucharist, then, we do not come as mere observers or passive

recipients. We come as worshippers. Through Christ, and with him, and in him, the Church, all of us, offers to the Father a sacrifice of praise, in thanksgiving for all that is "good, beautiful, and just in creation and in humanity."⁷

We must never forget the sacredness of what happens in every Mass. It would be unthinkable to reduce the Eucharist to mere ritual or routine. Instead, we are encouraged to approach it with reverence, with faith, and with hearts open to the mystery into which we are drawn, the mystery of our salvation.

May our participation in this holy sacrifice transform us more and more into the Body of Christ, united in love, nourished by divine grace, and sent out to be the living presence of Jesus in the world.

⁶ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1359.

⁷ *ibid.*,

Pray and reflect...

- i.** *How deeply do I enter into the mystery of the Eucharist each time I come to Mass?*

Am I consciously aware that I am not simply attending a ritual, but participating in the very sacrifice of Christ, offered for the salvation of the world?

- ii.** *In what ways is my reception of Holy Communion transforming my life and relationships?*

Do I recognize that by receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, I am also being called to live as a member of his Body, united with others in love, humility, service, and mission?

- iii.** *Do I approach the Mass as a true act of worship and thanksgiving, or has it become routine for me?*

How can I grow in reverence, attentiveness, and interior participation so that the Eucharist truly becomes the source and summit of my Christian life?

2. Jesus Christ is Truly Present in the Eucharist

One of the most beautiful and awe-inspiring truths of our Catholic faith is this: Jesus Christ is truly present in the Eucharist. Not symbolically, not merely spiritually, but truly, really, and substantially present, body, blood, soul, and divinity.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, quoting both Saint Thomas Aquinas and the Council of Trent, tells us that the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist is unique. "The body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ... the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained".⁸

This presence is called "real", not because the other ways in which Christ is present: in the Word, in the priest, and in the people, are not real. They are. Rather, in the Eucharist Jesus' presence is real in the fullest sense: substantial and personal. Jesus is not simply with us in thought or memory during the Mass, Jesus is here.

If we believe this, if we truly grasp that at every Mass, the same Jesus who walked the roads of Galilee, who died on the Cross, and rose from the tomb is present on the altar, then everything changes. The Eucharist becomes the very heart of our lives. It is, as Saint Thomas Aquinas said, "the perfection of the

spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend."⁹

We might envision it this way: all the sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Penance¹⁰, Marriage, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick, are like rivers, each carrying the grace of God through different moments of our lives. All of them flow toward one great and sacred sea: the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, we do not merely receive a gift of grace, we receive Jesus Christ himself, truly present, whole and entire.

For young people, perhaps still exploring or questioning the mystery, consider this: when you participate in the Mass, you are not just performing

⁸ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1374.

⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, 73, 3c.

¹⁰ Also called Confession or Reconciliation, the Sacrament of Penance is the sacred means by which sin is confessed, contrition expressed, and divine mercy received.

a religious duty. You are standing at the foot of the Cross and at the door of the empty tomb, both made present in this one sacrifice. The same Jesus who healed the blind, calmed the storm, and raised the dead, chooses to be as close to you as the food you eat.

This is neither an idea nor a metaphor. This is the Real Presence. This is the heart of Catholic life. And this is why we kneel. This is why we adore. This is why we come back, again and again, to the altar. Because Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God, is truly present.

And for those who have carried many years of faith, trials, and life's joys and sufferings: the Lord Jesus has never left you. In every Eucharist you have received, Jesus has renewed His promise, "I am with you always".¹¹ Even when we feel distant, even when our faith feels weak, Jesus is there.

So let us approach the Eucharist with renewed faith, deeper reverence, and open hearts. May we never forget: Jesus Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, and he comes to us, not because we deserve him, but because he loves us beyond all measure.

Pray and reflect...

i. *Do I truly believe that Jesus Christ is present, body, blood, soul, and divinity, in the Eucharist I receive?*

How does this belief (or struggle with belief) shape the way I approach the Mass, receive Holy Communion, and live my daily life?

ii. *How can I deepen my reverence for the Eucharist as the living presence of Jesus among us?*

What habits of prayer, preparation, or adoration might help me come before the Eucharist with greater awe, gratitude, and love?

iii. *What difference does the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist make in my relationship with God and with others?*

How might I respond more fully to Jesus' gift of himself by offering my life in love, service, and witness to those around me?

¹¹ Matthew 28:20.

3. The Gift that Remains: Jesus' Enduring Presence in the Eucharist

At every Mass, something extraordinary happens, not symbolically, not metaphorically, but truly and substantially. Bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This transformation, which the Church calls transubstantiation, takes place at the very moment of the consecration, the moment when the priest, standing in the person of Christ, speaks not his own words, but the words of Jesus himself:

“TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,
FOR THIS IS MY BODY,
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.
TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,
WHICH WILL BE POURED OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.
DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.”¹²

These are the words Jesus spoke at the Last Supper, and they are echoed by the ordained priest at every altar around the world. In that sacred moment, Christ becomes truly present, body, blood, soul, and divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine.

The Catechism teaches us that this Eucharistic presence begins at the moment of the consecration, and here is the wonder, it endures.¹³ Jesus does not disappear when the Mass ends. His presence remains as long as the Eucharistic species, the

consecrated host and the precious blood, subsist.

This means that when we come before the tabernacle, or kneel in Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, we are truly in the presence of the same Jesus who was born in Bethlehem, who calmed the seas, who suffered and died on the cross, and who rose again in glory. He is not far off. He is here.

Jesus Christ Our Lord is not partly present, not divided or broken. The Catechism, echoing the Council

¹² *Roman Missal*, Third Edition (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2010), “Eucharistic Prayer I,” 673.

¹³ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1377.

of Trent, reminds us that Christ is present whole and entire in each of the species, and in every part of each species. So even when the host is broken, Christ is not divided.¹⁴ He is entirely present in even the smallest fragment of the host, entirely present in every drop from the chalice.

This is why the Church treats the Eucharist with such profound reverence. This is why we genuflect. This is why we bow. This is why we kneel. Because the gift Jesus gave at the Last Supper, the gift of himself, is not temporary. Jesus remains.

Might we be intentional then, not to limit our love and devotion to Christ only to the time of the Mass. Let us remember: Jesus' gift of His Body and Blood is not a moment to be passed over, it is a Presence that abides.

Jesus greets us in every celebration of the Eucharist. He waits for us in every tabernacle. He invites us into communion, not just once, but always. Let us seek him, adore him, and love him, in the Mass, and long after we leave it, for Jesus is with us, truly and fully, in the Eucharist.

Pray and reflect...

i. *Do I truly recognize and respond to the enduring presence of Jesus in the tabernacle and in Eucharistic Adoration?*

How often do I take time to be with the Lord Jesus outside of Mass, simply to be in his presence, to listen, to worship, and to rest in his love?

ii. *How does my belief in Christ's real and abiding presence shape the way I behave in church, especially before and after Mass?*

Do I show reverence through silence, prayer, and gestures like genuflection, bowing, or kneeling, not out of habit, but from a heart aware of who is truly present?

iii. *In what ways can I carry the presence of Jesus I receive in the Eucharist into the rest of my daily life?*

How is Jesus calling me to live in such a way that his abiding presence in me becomes a light and a gift to others?

¹⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1377.

4. One Bread, One Chalice: Receiving the Lord in the Heart of the Mass

At every Mass, we gather around the altar not as strangers, but as the Body of Christ, united in faith, in purpose, and in our shared need for God's mercy and love. At the very heart of the Mass lies the most intimate moment of our communion with the Lord: receiving his Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* reminds us of something important:

“It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the Priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord's Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and that, in the cases where this is foreseen, they partake of the chalice, so that even by means of the signs Communion may stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated.”¹⁵

What does this mean for us?

It means that while all consecrated hosts are the true Body of Christ, whether received from the altar or from the tabernacle, the Church desires, whenever possible, that we receive from the very gifts that were brought forward, offered, consecrated, and elevated at that specific Mass.

Why? Because it expresses something beautiful and powerful: that we are sharing in the very sacrifice we have just celebrated together. The bread and wine we offer during the offertory become, through the words and hands of the priest, the Body and Blood of Christ. When we receive from those gifts, it becomes a visible and tangible sign that we are participants, not just observers, of the sacrifice of the Mass.

This is not about diminishing the reverence due to the consecrated hosts reserved in the tabernacle. Christ is truly present, body, blood, soul, and divinity, in every consecrated host, wherever it is received or reserved. The Church treasures the Eucharist reserved in the tabernacle for the sick, for those unable to attend Mass, and for adoration. There is no difference in the Real Presence.

¹⁵ General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 85.

However, receiving the bread and wine consecrated at that Mass speaks directly to our unity as the People of God. It is a sign that we are all nourished from the same altar-table, from the same sacrifice, from the one Bread and the one Chalice, as Saint Paul tells us:

“As there is one bread, so we, though many, are one body, for we all share in the one bread.”¹⁶

The Church also teaches that while Communion under both species, that is both the consecrated bread and wine, is a fuller sign of the Eucharistic banquet, it is not a requirement for a full Communion. Nothing is lacking in receiving only one species. Whether you receive the consecrated host or the Precious Blood from the chalice, you receive the whole Christ: body, blood, soul, and divinity.

So, when you come to Mass, bring your heart, your prayers, your needs, and your offerings to the altar. When the gifts are brought forward, remember this is not just bread and wine. It is your sacrifice, and ours together, that will be transformed.

And when the time comes to receive Holy Communion, let us approach with zeal for the Lord, with reverence, with unity, and with the awareness that we are being drawn into the very mystery of Christ’s love, the sacrifice that saves us and feeds us.

This is the joy and beauty of the Eucharist: that Jesus Christ gives himself entirely to us, and invites us to give ourselves entirely to him, not just as individuals, but as one Body, united in one Sacrifice.

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 10:17.

Pray and reflect...

- i.** *When I receive Holy Communion, do I see myself as an active participant in the sacrifice of the Mass, or more as a passive observer?*

How can I become more consciously united to the offering of Christ, and of the Church, at each Mass?

- ii.** *Do I reflect on the unity that Holy Communion creates with others in the Body of Christ?*

In what ways can I allow this shared participation in “one Bread and one Chalice” to shape how I treat, forgive, respect, and love those around me?

- iii.** *How do I prepare my heart before coming to the altar to receive Jesus Christ himself?*

What intentions, prayers, or sacrifices am I bringing forward to be united with the gifts on the altar?

5. Prepare the Way: Receiving Christ Worthily in the Eucharist

*Every time we come to the celebration of the Mass, we are invited to something truly profound: to stand at the foot of the Cross, and to receive Jesus Christ, truly present in the Eucharist, into our very lives. The Catechism reminds us that the Eucharist is both a meal, and a sacrifice, the same sacrifice of Christ on Calvary made present for us on the altar.*¹⁷

As the Church teaches:

“The Eucharist is also offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead, and to obtain spiritual or temporal benefits from God.”¹⁸

Each time we gather to celebrate the Mass, we come to offer ourselves with Jesus, for our own needs, for the needs of others, for the needs of the world, and for the souls of the faithful departed. It is a powerful and beautiful act of love.

But this gift is not automatic. It is not something we approach casually. The Catechism also gives us a clear and loving call:

“Anyone who desires to receive Christ in Eucharistic communion must be in the state of grace.”¹⁹

This means that we are urged to

make a genuine effort to come to Holy Communion with a heart ready to receive Jesus Our Lord, a heart free from mortal sin.²⁰ If we are aware of grave sin, we are called not to receive the Eucharist until we have first celebrated the Sacrament of Penance, confessed our sin, received absolution, and been reconciled to God and His Church.

This is not punishment. It is a gift. The Sacrament of Penance is where God meets us with mercy. By confessing our sins, we open our hearts honestly before the Lord, and we hear the beautiful words of absolution:

“I absolve you from your sins...”

These words restore us. They cleanse us. They lift the burden of sin from our heart, mind, and soul. They prepare the way for true communion with Jesus in the Eucharist.

¹⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1382.

¹⁸ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1414.

¹⁹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1415.

²⁰ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1855, 1857.

When we do receive the Eucharist with a heart that has been made ready, whether we have been burdened by sin or have simply brought our daily struggles and failings to God, something incredible happens.

“Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ increases the communicant’s union with the Lord, forgives venial sins, and preserves them from grave sins.”²¹

Receiving Jesus in Holy Communion strengthens our relationship with the Blessed Trinity, deepens our charity, and protects our souls. It also builds up the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, by drawing each of us closer together in unity, charity, and peace.

So, let this be a loving invitation to all of us, young and old, to prepare not only our clothing or our schedules for Sunday Mass, but to prepare our souls.

Let us seek the Sacrament of Penance regularly²², not merely out of obligation, but from a deep desire to be made ready to encounter the Lord. Let us examine our hearts, speak honestly with God, and receive the joy of divine forgiveness and mercy.

Each time we approach the altar in the state of grace, our communion is not just a moment, it becomes a living encounter with Jesus Christ that bears fruit in our lives: peace, strength, mercy, and joy.

Jesus longs to give himself to you. Let us be ready to receive Our Lord.

²¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1416.

²² It is helpful to clarify what “regularly” can mean in both spiritual and practical terms. The Church does not prescribe a single frequency for everyone; however, some pastorally appropriate options, depending on the person’s spiritual maturity, struggles, and life, might include: (i) once a month; (ii) fortnightly; (iii) seasonally - Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Ordinary Time; (iv) as needed, but not less than once a year.

Pray and reflect...

- i.** *Am I preparing my heart to receive Jesus in the Eucharist by regularly examining my conscience and seeking the Sacrament of Penance?*

Do I see Confession not as a burden, but as a gift of mercy that makes room in my soul for Jesus?

- ii.** *Do I approach Holy Communion with reverence, gratitude, and awareness of the sacred mystery I am receiving?*

Or have I allowed it to become routine or something I receive without reflection?

- iii.** *How does receiving Jesus in a state of grace shape my daily life, my relationships, my decisions, and my witness as a Christian?*

In what ways is the grace of the Eucharist bearing fruit in me?

6. Called to Communion: Renewing Our Eucharistic Practice

In every celebration of the Mass, the moment of Holy Communion is not simply a personal devotion, it is a sacred act of communion: with Christ, with the Church, and with one another. And yet, in recent years, particularly since the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the reception of Holy Communion in many of our communities has become, for various reasons, increasingly irregular.

Some faithful receive only occasionally; others remain in their place while others process to the altar. Some approach with great reverence; others may seem unsure or unaware of how to engage with this sacred moment. While every individual has personal circumstances, this growing irregularity can unintentionally shift the focus from the communal nature of the Eucharist to something more individualistic, even unintentionally drawing attention to one's personal piety rather than our unity in Christ.

As we continue to renew our Eucharistic life together, it is helpful to return to the wisdom and guidance of the Church, not to impose burdens, but to help us more fully enter the mystery we celebrate. In 2018, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference offered simple but important guidelines for all the faithful when participating in

the reception of Holy Communion. These are small acts, but they carry deep meaning. In our community of the Church of Broken Bay, I offer the following guidelines to assist our participation and reception of Holy Communion:

1. Sing as you process

*"When possible, join in the singing of the Communion chant or hymn during the Communion procession."*²³

The Communion hymn is not background music. It is the voice of the Church, our voices, raised together in thanksgiving and joy as we approach the Lord. Singing unites us, not only in melody, but in purpose. It expresses the gladness of our hearts and reminds us that this is not a private act, but a shared journey toward the one Bread and the one Chalice.

²³ cf. General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 86; ACBC "Guidelines for Reverent Reception of Holy Communion" (2018, revised 2020).

2. Stand with reverence

“In the dioceses of Australia, standing is the most common posture to receive Holy Communion, though individual members of the faithful may choose to receive Communion while kneeling.”²⁴

Our posture speaks. In Australia, the common posture is to stand as a sign of respect and unity, while some may choose to kneel. Both are permitted. However, whatever we choose, let us be mindful of those around us. The Communion procession should flow smoothly, without disruption, so that our focus remains not on one another’s actions, but on Christ whom we are about to receive.

3. Bow in reverence

“When approaching to receive Holy Communion, bow in reverence of the Sacrament you are to receive.”²⁵

This simple gesture, a bow, is a powerful sign of faith. It reminds us that we are not receiving ordinary food. We are receiving the Body and

Blood of Christ. A shared gesture of reverence helps to express our common belief and our shared devotion to the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

None of these actions are about external performance. Rather, they are small but powerful signs of our interior disposition, and when done together, they visibly express that we are one Body receiving the One Lord.

As we approach the altar at Mass, whether weekly or daily, let us do so with hearts that are ready, reverent, and joyful. Can we intentionally be mindful that in Holy Communion, we are drawn into the very life of Jesus Christ and the unity of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

Let us also gently and humbly encourage one another by our example, helping our parish and faith communities rediscover not just the importance of receiving Holy Communion, but the grace of receiving it well: together, with faith, and with love.

²⁴ cf. General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 160; ACBC “Guidelines for Reverent Reception of Holy Communion” (2018, revised 2020).

²⁵ Ibid.,

Pray and reflect...

- i.** *How do my outward actions during Holy Communion, my posture, gestures, and attitude, reflect the inner reverence and faith I hold for the Eucharist?*

Am I mindful that even small acts, like singing or bowing, can be expressions of deep belief and communal unity?

- ii.** *Do I see Holy Communion primarily as a personal moment, or as a sacred act of unity with Christ and the whole Church?*

How might I grow in awareness that I receive the Eucharist not alone, but as part of the one Body of Christ?

- iii.** *In what ways can I help renew a spirit of reverence, participation, and unity in my parish or faith community's practice of receiving Holy Communion?*

Am I willing to lead by quiet example, and gently encourage others to rediscover the beauty of our shared Eucharistic life?

7. Receiving the Body of Christ: A Sacred Encounter

In every celebration of the Holy Eucharist, we are invited to approach the altar of God and receive Jesus Christ Himself, His Body, given for us. This is not a mere ritual, nor simply a symbol, nor should it ever be reduced to routine. It is a profound and sacred encounter with the living Lord, who comes to us humbly under the appearance of bread.

And so, how we approach this moment, how we receive the Body of Christ, truly matters. It speaks of our faith, our reverence, and our unity as members of the Body of Christ, the Church.

Throughout our diocese, it has been brought to my attention that, for a variety of reasons, be they cultural, personal preference, or pious up-bringing, there is uncertainty among many of the faithful about how to receive Holy Communion properly. It is timely, therefore, that I offer this gentle reminder and instruction to help us all approach the Eucharist with greater clarity, dignity, and devotion.

Two Options for Receiving the Body of Christ:

First and foremost, the Church allows two ways of receiving the consecrated host during Holy Communion:

✠ **On the hand**, or

✠ **On the tongue.**

Both are fully acceptable, and **the choice belongs to the communicant**, not the minister. Priests, Deacons, Acolytes, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are called to be **pastorally sensitive** to each person, ensuring that all receive the Lord with reverence, respect, and care.

But reverence is a two-way street. Communicants must also be well-prepared and well-disposed, interiorly through prayer and a state of grace, and exteriorly through posture and gesture.

Receiving on the hand

When receiving on the hand, we are invited to do so with deep reverence. The early Church Father, Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, gave us beautiful instruction:

“Place your left hand as a throne beneath your right, as befits one who is about to receive the King... Then receive Him, taking care that nothing is lost.”²⁶

Hold your hands still, steady, and flat, not open fingers or cupped hands from a distance. Most importantly, do not take or pluck the host from the minister. We receive Communion; we do not grab it. For reasons of hygiene, please be attentive to ensure that you do not touch the hand or fingers of the minister giving you Holy Communion. After receiving the host, step to the side and consume the whole of it immediately and with devotion.

Whether left- or right-handed, the important thing is to receive in a way that is reverent, deliberate, and dignified.

Receiving on the tongue

If you choose to receive on the tongue, please make it simple for the Priest or minister of Holy Communion to place the host with care and without contact. This means:

- Open your mouth fully,
- Tilt your head back slightly,
- Extend your tongue beyond your lips.

This allows the Priest or Minister to place the host reverently and avoids awkward or accidental contact, such as licking or biting, which is obviously to be avoided out of respect and hygiene.

Common gestures of unity

As a shared act of worship, our gestures matter. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal reminds us:

*“When approaching to receive Holy Communion, bow in reverence of the Sacrament you are to receive.”*²⁷

This simple bow, made just before receiving, is a sign of faith and unity, reminding us that we are one body, receiving the One Lord.

Clean hands, a spoken “Amen” in response to *“The Body of Christ,”* and a composed posture, all these external actions reflect the interior love and reverence we hold for Jesus in the Eucharist.

²⁶ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses Mystagogicae* V.21–22 (c. 313–386 AD).

²⁷ General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 160; ACBC “Guidelines for Reverent Reception of Holy Communion” (2018, revised 2020).

In all things, let us be mindful of the sacredness of the moment. The way we receive Holy Communion should never draw attention to ourselves, but rather, point toward the Lord who gives himself to us so freely and so completely.

May we always receive Jesus with hearts full of faith, with bodies that

reflect that faith, and with a spirit of unity with our sisters and brothers at the altar.

Let us approach the Eucharist not just with routine, but with awe, love, and joy, for we receive not a thing, but a Person: Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God.

Pray and reflect...

- i.** *Do I approach Holy Communion as a sacred and personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or has it become a routine act for me?*

How can I renew my sense of awe and reverence for this moment in the Mass?

- ii.** *Is the way I receive the Eucharist, through my posture, gestures, and attentiveness, a true reflection of my faith and love for the Lord?*

What small changes could I make to receive with greater dignity, reverence, and intentionality?

- iii.** *How does my reception of Holy Communion express my unity with others participating in the Mass?*

In what ways can I help foster a spirit of shared reverence and clarity around this sacred moment in my parish or faith community?

8. A Cup of Blessing: The Return of Holy Communion from the Chalice

The Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of our Christian life. In every Mass, Christ gives himself to us fully, under the appearances of bread and wine. For many years, the faithful in our Diocese of Broken Bay were able to receive both the consecrated host and the Precious Blood, a beautiful sign of sharing in the fullness of the Eucharistic banquet.

However, as we all remember, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about many necessary changes and some unwelcome interruptions. One of those was the temporary suspension of Communion from the chalice. This was not done to deprive the faithful of grace, nor to cast doubt on the fullness of Communion received under one species. Rather, it was a decision made out of pastoral concern, an expression of care for our brothers and sisters, and for the common good.

Now, with joy and pastoral care, as the Bishop of Broken Bay, having prudently consulted priests and people from our community, I have taken the decision that from the Solemnity of Christ the King, Sunday, 23 November 2025, Holy Communion from the chalice will once again be made available throughout the diocese.

This reintroduction comes with both freedom and responsibility.

First, it is important to remember that receiving from the chalice is not obligatory.

Those who desire to receive the Precious Blood and are free from contagious illness are most welcome to do so. At the same time, those who choose to receive only the consecrated host still receive the whole Christ. Again, I remind you that the Church has always taught that Christ is fully present in both the consecrated bread and wine. Nothing is lacking when we receive under only one species.

Second, this is a moment for reverence and common sense.

Refraining from receiving from the chalice when you are unwell is not a sign of weak faith in the Real Presence. It is a sign of charity, respect for others, and mature awareness of public health. Sharing from a common cup requires that we be physically well and consid-

erate of those who may be more vulnerable, particularly the elderly or immunocompromised.

Therefore, I ask that special care be taken, especially during winter and flu seasons:

- Only metal chalices, traditionally made of precious metal, are to be used.
- Purificators must be clean for each Mass and laundered after use.
- Ministers of the chalice should serve with attentiveness and reverence.

But the greatest responsibility lies with each communicant. We are each called to discern not only what is best for ourselves, but also for our community. This is an outward sign of our communion, with Jesus and with one another.

Practical guidelines for receiving from the chalice:

- 1.** If you choose to receive, approach the minister with the chalice after receiving the host. When the minister says, *“The Blood of Christ,”* respond, *“Amen,”* take the chalice in your hands, drink a small amount, and return it carefully to the minister.
- 2.** It is not permitted to self-intinct, that is, to dip the host into the chalice yourself. This is not only liturgically improper, it can also pose hygiene concerns, especially when fingers come into contact with the Precious Blood in the chalice.

Above all, let this be a moment marked by charity, reverence, and joy. As Saint Paul reminds us, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a fellowship in the Blood of Christ?”²⁸

As we take up again this ancient and sacred practice, may we do so with deep gratitude, care for one another, and renewed awareness of the gift we receive in the Eucharist, Jesus Christ himself, poured out for us.

²⁸ 1 Corinthians 10:16.

Pray and reflect...

- i.** *How do I understand and value the opportunity to receive from the chalice as a sign of deeper communion with Christ and with the Church?*

Do I participate with gratitude, reverence, and awareness of its sacred meaning?

- ii.** *In what ways am I called to show care and responsibility toward others in how I participate in Holy Communion, especially in times of illness or vulnerability?*

Am I attentive to both my own spiritual needs and the wellbeing of the wider community?

- iii.** *How can I cultivate a renewed reverence for the Eucharist as the “cup of blessing” shared in love, sacrifice, and unity with the Body of Christ?*

What does it mean for me personally to receive the Precious Blood of Christ?

Conclusion: The Mystery of Our Faith

As we journey together toward the 54th International Eucharistic Congress in 2028, I urge you to lift your eyes and hearts once more to the sacred mystery at the heart of our Catholic faith: the Holy Eucharist.

The Eucharist is not merely a celebration of community, nor is it only the memorial of a past event. It is both, and infinitely more. The Eucharist is the Lord's Supper, where we are invited to the table of the Lamb. It is the Sacrifice of Calvary, made present anew on the altar at every Mass. It is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, who triumphs over death and gives us a share in his eternal life. It is, in its fullness, the Paschal Mystery, the dying and rising of Christ into which we are drawn by grace.

Each time we gather at the altar, heaven touches earth. In the power of the Holy Spirit, the veil between time and eternity is lifted, and we glimpse the glory of God. We do not simply remember; we participate. We are not spectators; we are made

partakers of the divine life of the Blessed Trinity. This is why we call it "the mystery of faith."

As we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we are united more deeply to Our Lord and to one another. We become what we receive: the Body of Christ, sent as missionaries into the world to live, to love, and to serve. This sacred mystery is not confined to the sanctuary or to an hour of Sunday worship. It transforms our daily lives. It compels us toward justice, mercy, holiness, and mission.

May we never take the Eucharist for granted. Together let us approach it with awe, with reverence, and with joy. Let us prepare our hearts and renew our devotion so that, with each Mass, we may truly enter

the Paschal Mystery and allow it to shape who we are, beloved sons and daughters of God.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Woman

of the Eucharist and Star of the Sea intercede for us. May our love for Jesus in the Eucharist grow ever deeper, and may our lives proclaim with confidence and gratitude:

“When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.”

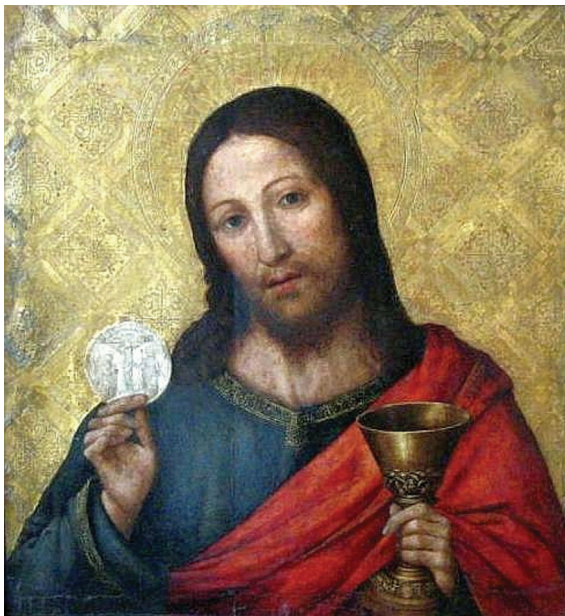
The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

14 September 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Anthony Randazzo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The plus sign is at the beginning, followed by the first name "Anthony" and the last name "Randazzo".

Most Rev Anthony Randazzo

Bishop of Broken Bay



"This sacred artwork by San Leocadio portrays Our Lord Jesus Christ bearing the sacred host and chalice, visible signs of the mystery of the Eucharist. Christ himself is the true Eucharist and he offers himself to the faithful as spiritual food and drink in Holy Communion".

Appendix I

Collect from the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)

O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament
have left us a memorial of your Passion,
grant us, we pray,
so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood
that we may always experience in ourselves
the fruits of your redemption.
Who live and reign with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever. *Amen*

Appendix II

From the Psalms to the Altar

Psalm 34:2-3. *I will bless the Lord at all times*

I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall be always in my mouth.

My soul shall glory in the Lord;
the lowly will hear and be glad.

Psalm 23:1-2. *The Lord is my Shepherd*

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.

Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.

Near restful waters he leads me;
he revives my soul.

Psalm 42:1-2. *Yearning for God*

Like the deer that yearns
for running streams,
so my soul is yearning
for you, my God.

My soul is thirsting for God,
the living God;
when can I enter and appear
before the face of God?

Psalm 27: 8-9a, 13-14. *The Lord is my light and my salvation*

Of you my heart has spoken,
“Seek his face.”

It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;

hide not your face from me.

I believe I shall see the Lord’s goodness
in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let your heart take courage.
Wait for the Lord!

Psalm 84:1-2. *Yearning for God’s House*

How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord, mighty God!

My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh cry out
for the living God.

Psalm 146:1-2, 7b-8. *Praise to the Lord for unfailing help*

Alleluia!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

I will praise the Lord all my life,
sing praise to my God while I live.

It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the Lord who sets prisoners free,

the Lord who opens the eyes of the blind,
the Lord who raises up those who are bowed down.

Appendix III

Prayer for Healing and Reconciliation

God, the Father of mercies,
with confidence, I turn to you.
In your compassionate love, heal and purify the memory of my sin.
Free me from the distraction of past failures,
the burden of guilt, and the fear that keeps me from returning to you.
Whether I have come to you often, or have been away for a long time,
you have never stopped waiting for me.
You are the God who seeks, who heals, who welcomes.
Pour out your Spirit upon my mind and heart,
that I may trust in your forgiveness,
and with renewed dignity live life to the full
as your beloved.

Through Christ Jesus, your Son,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
now and for ages unending. *Amen*

Pastoral Note

I offer this prayer to assist all members of the faithful, especially those who carry deep burdens from the past, whether through long absences from the Sacrament of Penance or through recurring scrupulosity.

Some are so weighed down by memories of sin or shame that they feel lost in the shadows of darkness. For them, approaching the Sacrament can be difficult, painful, or even traumatic. Others may have been away from confession for many years and feel unsure how to return, fearing judgment, rejection, or unworthiness.

This prayer is offered as a gentle encouragement to all who seek healing and reconciliation. It reminds us that God's merciful love is not measured by our worthiness, but by God's infinite compassion. The Lord never tires of welcoming us home. No matter how long we have been away, or how heavy the burden we carry, God's grace is always greater.

Let this be a step toward trust, an invitation to rediscover the beauty of reconciliation, and a way to prepare our hearts and souls to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.



Notes and personal reflections



Notes and personal reflections



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