



[Jesus] took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

(Lk 22:19)

## When do we see bread during Mass and when does it become the Real Presence of Jesus?

During the part of the Mass called the 'Liturgy of the Eucharist', the bread is typically brought to the altar as one of the gifts presented to the priest. (During the pandemic the gifts are already in the sanctuary on the credence table; this small table is on the left side of the sanctuary, it is where vessels are kept during Mass.) The priest says a prayer over the offerings and then begins the Eucharistic prayer, the prayer of thanksgiving!



During this prayer, the priest says the 'institution narrative' and when he says, "This is my body", the consecration is complete: the bread is the Real Presence of Jesus - the whole Christ is truly present, body, blood, soul, and divinity. The priest raises the bread and the chalice for all to see! The Eucharist appears as bread but is now the body of Christ. This is called 'transubstantiation' - the "substance" of the bread and wine is changed by the power of the Holy Spirit into the "substance" of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ! The Eucharistic prayer ends with the 'Great Amen.'

The Communion rite then begins and we say the Lord's Prayer. After the sign of peace, we break bread together. This begins with the 'Lamb of God', then the priest raises the host above the paten or the chalice and says, 'Behold the Lamb of God...' and then consumes the Body of Christ. After consuming the Precious Blood, he distributes Communion to all in attendance.

Each person who participates in Communion receives Jesus in the Eucharist! (We prepare for this great moment by reconciling with God in Confession.) After, we are offered time to pray and be grateful for this amazing gift.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: "Do not see in the bread and wine merely natural elements, because the Lord has expressly said that they are his Body and his Blood: faith assures you of this, though your senses suggest otherwise."

