

Welcome to the start of our Source and Summit Saturday's. To start off I thought today's first talk should be to explain what exactly that phrase means. What does it mean when we say that the Eucharist is the source and summit of our Christian life, faith, and of our Christian spirituality? Well for starters the phrase itself can be found in our catechism as well as in documents from Vatican II. So its not some poetic haiku that we just say, but is rooted in our very beliefs. So what does it mean?

It means that everything begins with and ends with the Eucharist itself. It is literally the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and end. All things find their purpose and their cause within the Eucharist. Christian spirituality flows from the Eucharist and in living out that spirituality everything we do should then be pointed back to it. Our faith, our lives, our very being, begins in the Eucharist, and ultimately if lived out faithfully should also end with it.

Living out our lives in true faith means living a sacramental life. And so then this also means that every Sacrament has its being within the Eucharist as well. It means that the very life of the Church, her mission, our lives, and our callings within the church are all intimately connected to the very being of the Eucharist itself. It means that the work we do, whether its as a priest, a deacon, or as a lay-person, any work we do that expresses the nature of our being a Christian, is also founded within that very same Eucharist.

Because our Christian faith depends solely on its source being the Eucharist, we can say that without the Eucharist there would be no church, there would be no priests, and there would be no Christians.

Yes, without the Eucharist the world would never know what a Christian is. It would also never know what eternal life, salvation, true love, mercy, hope, or forgiveness truly looked like as well.

Now I'm not going to go into a deep history lesson or anything, but if your thinking you know lots of Christians who don't believe in or have the Eucharist, remember this. Every Christian denomination owes its roots to Catholicism, and in turn the Eucharist. Up until Martin Luther broke from the Church in the early 1500's being Christian meant being Catholic. There was no distinction.

Ultimately everything has its roots in the Eucharist, and everything is always oriented towards it. The reason for this is because contained within the Eucharist is the whole spiritual good of the entire Church, which is namely Christ himself. The Eucharist is and continues to be the sign and cause of our own relationship with the divine, its how we unite ourselves to God and to the Heavenly liturgy, as well as how we anticipate that eternal life with him.

As the source and summit, as the beginning and the end, the Eucharist helps to reveal to us that our salvation starts with God, not ourselves. It shows us that the source of all grace comes from Christ. And that all grace brings us closer to him. As the source of grace the Eucharist shows us that it is also the foundation of what it means to strive deeper to instill within ourselves, our children, and the people around us, the virtues of faith, hope, and love.

As the source of faith we find a strength within the Eucharist to give ourselves over to God more fully, and unconditionally. It becomes the source, and the reason, that we are able to stand together in a united faith. In a faith that professes the one universal apostolic Church.

As the source of hope, it reminds us of the gift and promise of life to come. It shows us the power that Christ has over death each time we encounter him within the Eucharist at mass. It shows us that, as being the source of our very own hope, we too will one day conquer death. That by living with, and in, Christ we share in that resurrection, as we share in the Eucharist.

And as the source of love. St. John Paul II once said "Christian life is expressed in the fulfilling of the greatest commandment, of loving God and neighbor, and that this love finds its source in the blessed Sacrament, which is commonly called the sacrament of love." The Eucharist is Christ, it is the word made flesh found in the species of bread and wine, and it is the living embodiment of love itself.

As we continue to journey through this lenten season, as we continue to journey through life trying to draw closer to and deeper in love with Christ, do so knowing that the Eucharist is the source of that relationship, and of that life. Do so knowing that the journey we take begins with that source and finds its completion, its summit, in a perfect unity with God himself. It is a journey that can only begin with and end with the source and summit of our faith, the Eucharist.