

“Its snack time”. “Time to go get the cracker”. “Does this actually mean anything?”

These are all things that I have heard when people talk about the Eucharist which may seem shocking and all be it sac religious, but this shows the underlying problem currently at play when it comes to the Eucharist. When most people come up to the front of the church and are given the host they simply consume it and that’s the end of it. They don’t think about it; it is more of a routine that they go through. I am certainly not guilt free in this and I would guess most of you are not either. However, when we do this we are chipping away at the very foundation upon which this faith has been built. If you take a close look at the Catholicism sector of Christianity, the main thing that differentiates us from all the rest is the celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist. Other Christians merely view it as a symbol, but for us as Catholics this is the ultimate part of our faith and our celebration of it. It is what sets us as a faith apart. But why is this? Why is it considered to be the center of our faith?

If you were to stop and take a look at the people who have been the most content or happy in their lives, you would find these people to mainly consist of the religious life of Catholicism. The answer to why this is can be explained by the Eucharist. All humans have one main goal: happiness and/or fulfillment. The Eucharist when translated from the Greek means thanksgiving. It is because in the Eucharist we are fulfilled. We are given everything that we need to be happy and fulfilled, and I would think that would result in thanksgiving. When we just walk up to the front of the church every week and don’t think about the sacrament that we are receiving we are robbing ourselves of the ability to be fulfilled. If you stop and think about what the Eucharist actually is, you can see just how this fulfillment is possible. The Eucharist doesn’t automatically make a difference in your life. It requires us to take action. It is like eating

healthy. If you eat healthy you don't just go home and sit on the couch. If you do this the healthy eating has a diminished effect. This is the same thing. God is doing his part when we consume the Eucharist, it is then our job to take action.

I'm not an expert when it comes to Catholicism, but I do know that the Eucharist is a huge key to being happy. Praying and going to church in and of itself are very important acts that are central to the practice of the Catholic faith, but it isn't until the Eucharist is made the main part of that practice that people really begin to feel a connection to their faith.

For many years I would describe myself as a routine catholic which means that I would simply go to church and sit there with my mind elsewhere for the entire time and then I would leave to then come back the next week and do the same thing all over again. This left me feeling very distant from my faith and from God. I didn't really even feel that I could call myself a Catholic at times. At the same time, I was devoting all of my time to performing well in school. All I did was study, and even during mass I would sit there just planning out all the work that I had to do. I thought for the longest time that the key to my happiness was being at the top of my game when it came to my academics. To some degree this was true, but even when I received the top grade on an exam I was still left feeling a bit empty. I began to see that I needed something else because I was going to be in school for several more years, and if I wanted to be truly happy I needed to not devote my whole life to my academics. However it was hard for me to pinpoint a way to feel content. It Like there was something missing and I was right.

All the while I was missing my relationship with God. So, I set out to see how I could remedy this situation. After I went on a retreat my senior year of high school I was able to see

that not only being mindful during mass was a key but the main part was paying attention and entering into a prayerful mindset when I receive the Eucharist. To me the Eucharist is the biggest part of my faith. When we receive the Eucharist we are quite literally made one with God flesh and blood. When I began to think about this and began to quiet my mind during this time is when I found that God was able to guide me in my life. He was able to walk through me on my journey of life and able to help me get through each rough week that I had. The Eucharist refreshes my relationship each week with God. It helps to remind me that He is there walking right alongside with me. This was never something that I was able to experience when I wasn't mindful of the Eucharist. It allows me to feel like I am starting my week off right and will have help along the way. When I know that God is right alongside me and will be carrying some of the weight of the stress or burdens that I have to go through it helps me to be ready to face the things that I have to take on and perhaps even take on more.

The Eucharist has renewed my faith and my relationship with God to the point that I would now consider myself to be a devoted Catholic. I talk with God every day now and every week when I go to mass I feel that I grow even closer to God. This is an ongoing process, but I continue to strengthen my relationship through the Eucharist every time that I am at mass. This has been the biggest turning point in my life. To be able to share your life with God is truly a blessing.

I recommend that everyone find a way to connect with God while receiving the Eucharist. To just shut off your mind and your problems because we all have a million things going on, but what we all can do right now is completely devote ourselves to this sacrament and become one with God.