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The Eucharist



God, our loving Father,
thank you for all the ways you bless me.
Help me to be aware that every person,
place, and adventure I experience is an
opportunity to love you more.
Fill me with a desire to change and to grow,
and give me the grace to become
the-best-version-of-myself in
every moment of every day.

Amen.

Food for the Soul

God has blessed you in so many ways, but he isn't finished blessing you. There are still thousands of blessings God wants to shower upon you. One of the great blessings God wants to share with you is the Eucharist. Every day you are getting closer to receiving Jesus in the Eucharist! Are you excited?

The Eucharist is food for the soul. That's right, your soul gets hungry just like your body gets hungry. It's easy to tell when your body gets hungry because your tummy growls and you feel weak and tired. But how do you know when your soul is hungry? When our souls are hungry we become restless, impatient, angry, and selfish. But most of all, we find it harder to do what we know we should do.

When our souls get hungry we need to feed them. The Eucharist is the ultimate soul food, but we can also feed our souls with prayer, the Scriptures, and serving other people.

You feed your body every day. You don't wait until it is starving before you feed it. You have a regular routine of meals and snacks to make sure your body has the food and energy it needs to thrive. We need a routine like that for feeding our souls too. This routine includes daily prayer, grace before meals, service to others, and of course, Sunday Mass.

The Mass is an incredible blessing because it feeds your soul in many ways. The Word of God feeds your soul, receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist feeds your soul, and participating in a community of faith feeds your soul.

We've already talked about the Word of God and how important it is to listen to God. Now let's talk about how he feeds us with the Eucharist.



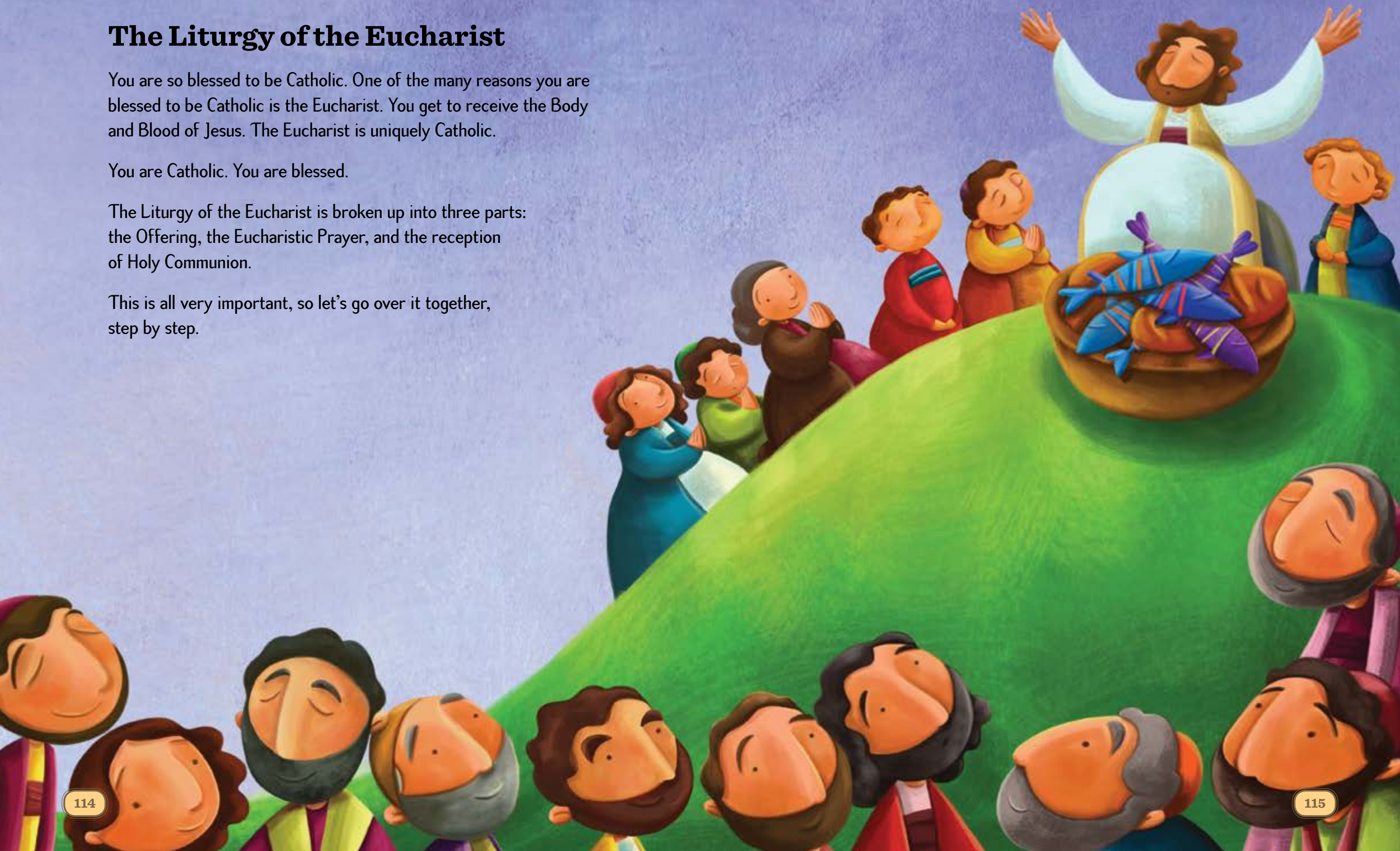
The Liturgy of the Eucharist

You are so blessed to be Catholic. One of the many reasons you are blessed to be Catholic is the Eucharist. You get to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus. The Eucharist is uniquely Catholic.

You are Catholic. You are blessed.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist is broken up into three parts: the Offering, the Eucharistic Prayer, and the reception of Holy Communion.

This is all very important, so let's go over it together, step by step.



The Offertory

Throughout the Mass, God gives us moments to pause and experience its many wonders. The offertory is one of those moments.

During the offertory a family from the parish usually brings the bread and wine, along with the money we put in the collection for the Church and the poor. Then the priest prepares the gifts to offer them to God.

As the gifts are being brought forward and the priest is preparing the gifts, we offer ourselves completely to God. We can do this with a simple prayer in our hearts. Here is an example:

Lord, I give myself completely to you right now. Teach me, lead me, and feed me with the Eucharist so I can serve you powerfully here in this world and live with you forever in heaven.

The offertory is also a great time to bring our problems to God and ask for his help. If there is someone you know who is suffering or something that you are struggling with, ask Jesus to heal the situation. He is the great healer. The offertory is a perfect time to ask Jesus the Healer to intervene in your life. Here are some examples:

**Jesus, help me study hard for my test.
Jesus, my friend is sick. Help her to get better.
Jesus, my brother hurt my feelings. Help me to forgive him.
Jesus, help me to listen better to my parents.**

You are on a great journey with God. Your destination is heaven. God wants to be your guide and companion on this journey. He wants to be invited into every detail of your life so that he can best guide and advise you. He wants to show you the best way to live. God wants to help you become the-best-version-of-yourself, grow in virtue, and live a holy life.





The Eucharistic Prayer

We've always celebrated the presence of God.

The Jewish people believed that God was present in the Ark of the Covenant. For a long time, the Ark was lost. This was a very sad time for the Jewish people. They tried very hard to find it because they wanted to be close to God.

When King David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, the people were overjoyed. So was King David. He was so happy that when he brought the Ark back to his people, he danced with great joy. Nothing made King David happier than being in the presence of God.

The Eucharist is God in our midst.

Every time we go to Mass or visit a Catholic Church where Jesus is inside the tabernacle, God is physically with us in the Eucharist. The word Eucharist means "thanksgiving;" we are thankful to have God with us always.

The Eucharistic Prayer is the most important part of the Mass because this is when Jesus comes to be with us. This is when the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

During the Eucharistic Prayer we thank God for his friendship and for coming once again through the Eucharist to share his life with us.

The Consecration

The consecration is the moment when the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. This is an incredible moment—that's why we kneel down for the consecration. Kneeling is a simple and profound sign of reverence. When we kneel during the Mass, it is a sign that something amazing is about to happen.

Just before kneeling, we pray the *Holy, Holy, Holy* together as a parish family:

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Now we kneel and prepare for the great moment of consecration. Leading up to the consecration, the priest reminds us what happened at the Last Supper, the very first Eucharist.

To consecrate the bread and the wine, the priest says the same words Jesus said during the Last Supper:

**This is my Body, which is given up for you;
This is the Blood of the new and everlasting covenant,
do this in memory of me.**



Our Father

This is the moment of consecration. After the priest says these words, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. The consecration of the Eucharist is one of the great mysteries of our faith.

The Eucharistic Prayer ends with the Great Amen. Sometimes we say the Amen and sometimes we sing it. Either way we should say it loud and with confidence. This is our way of saying, “Yes! Jesus, I believe in you! I believe that the bread and the wine just became your Body and Blood!”

Following the Great Amen, we stand and pray the *Our Father* together.

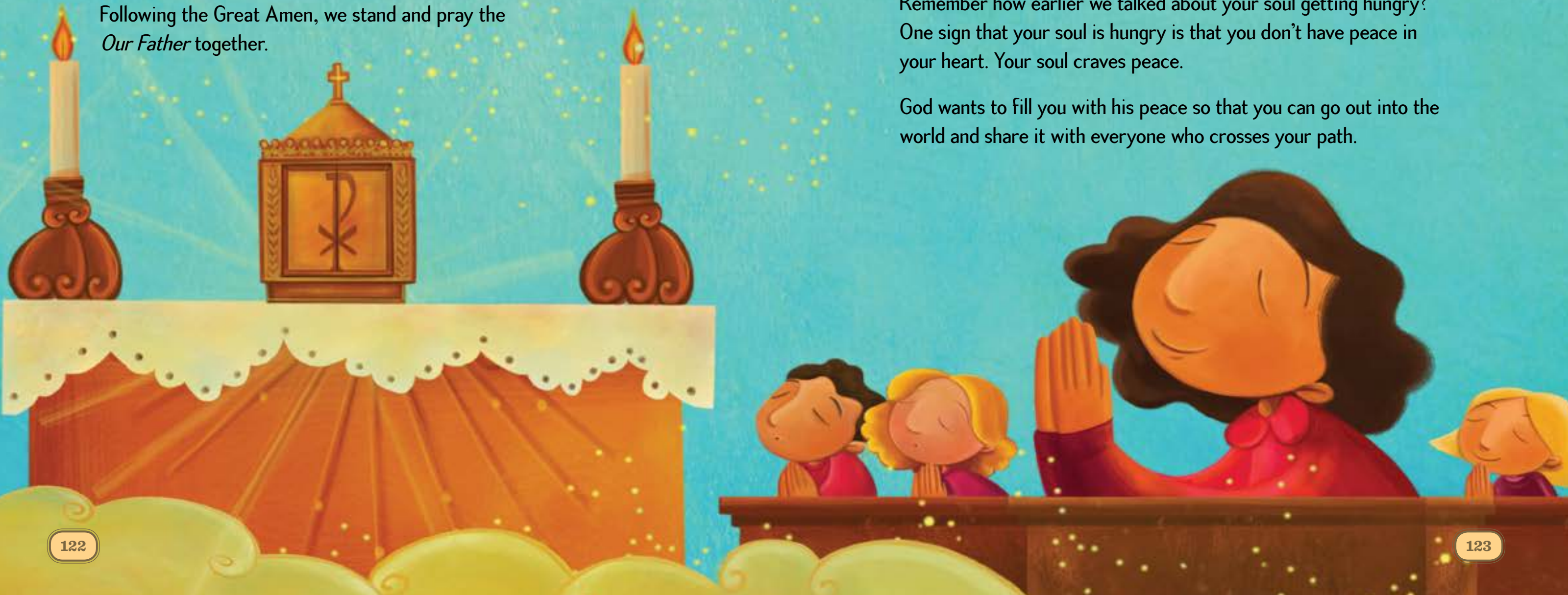
Do you remember one of the main reasons why Jesus taught us this prayer? We talked about it while preparing for your First Reconciliation. Let’s revisit it for a moment.

You are blessed. You are the son or daughter of a great King. Jesus wanted us to always remember that God is our Father and that we are children of God.

The *Our Father* reminds us of the first blessing God gives us: life!

After the *Our Father*, the priest asks God to fill us with his peace. Remember how earlier we talked about your soul getting hungry? One sign that your soul is hungry is that you don’t have peace in your heart. Your soul craves peace.

God wants to fill you with his peace so that you can go out into the world and share it with everyone who crosses your path.



Holy Communion

When you receive Holy Communion Jesus gives himself completely to you. In the prayers leading up to the consecration we remember that Jesus died for us on the cross to save us from our sins. This is not meant to make you feel guilty; it is meant to make you feel loved. God wants you to remember how much you mean to him.

One of the most famous passages in the entire Bible is John 3:16:

**For God so loved the world that he sent his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish
but have eternal life.**

God loved you so much that he sent his son, Jesus, so that you could have eternal life. For God so loved YOU that he sent Jesus so that YOU may have eternal life! You are loved and indeed blessed!

Let's say this out loud together:

**God loves me so much that he sent his son Jesus so that
I could have eternal life and live with him forever in heaven.**



How did that feel?

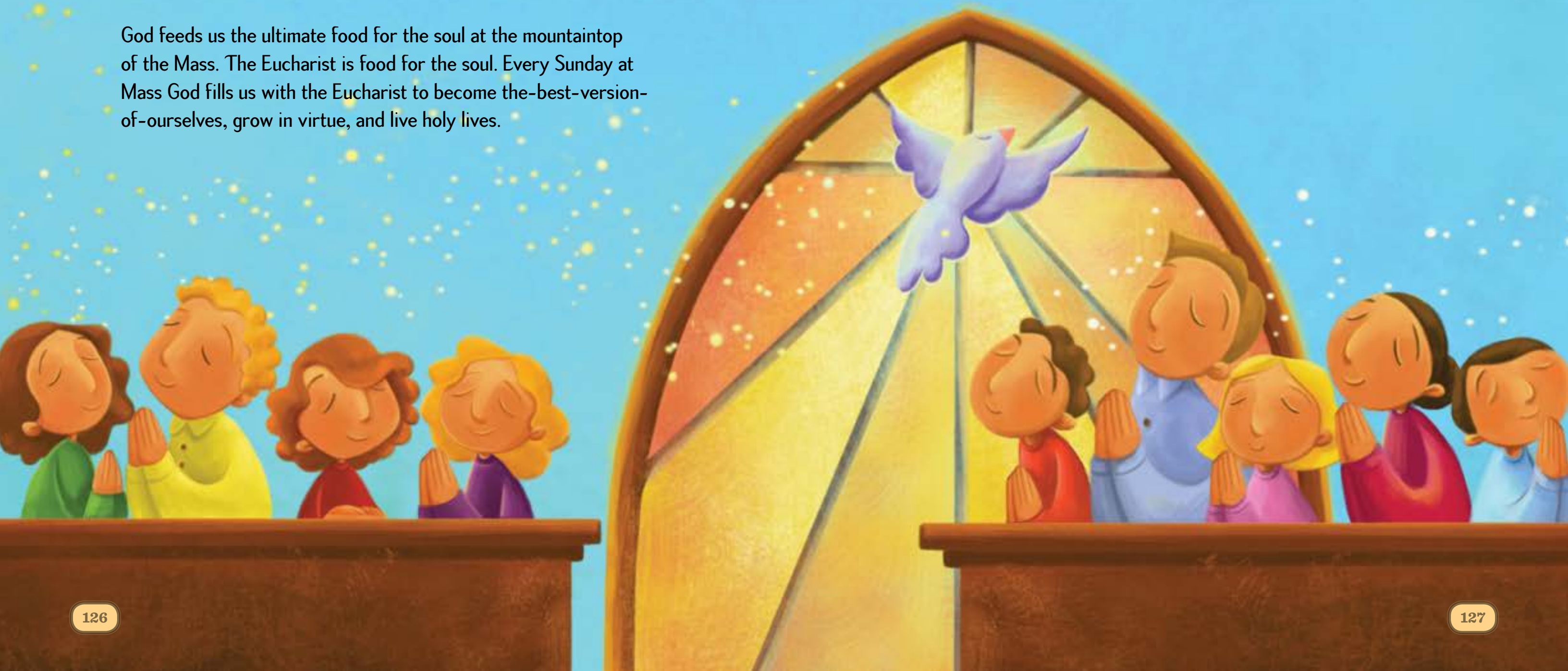
God always wants you to feel loved. And when we receive Jesus in the Eucharist this is a special moment of God's love.

If you ever get to climb a huge mountain, the feeling of looking out across the vast surroundings from the top of that mountain is an amazing experience. The Mass is like climbing a great mountain. Receiving the Eucharist is the top of the mountain, the pinnacle of the Mass.

God feeds us the ultimate food for the soul at the mountaintop of the Mass. The Eucharist is food for the soul. Every Sunday at Mass God fills us with the Eucharist to become the-best-version-of-ourselves, grow in virtue, and live holy lives.

Receiving Holy Communion is an incredible gift that we should never take for granted.

When the moment arrives to receive Jesus, you will stand before the priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister and he will raise the host and say, "The Body of Christ." You will respond by saying, "Amen," and then consume the Host.



The True Presence

Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. It is not a symbol; it is Jesus. This is one of the most beautiful mysteries of the Catholic faith.

When Jesus first started telling people about the Eucharist, some found it difficult to believe. Throughout the centuries, others have had doubts about Jesus being truly present in the Eucharist too.

In the 8th century there was a priest in Italy who was having these doubts. One day while he was saying Mass, as he consecrated the bread and wine they literally turned into living flesh and blood. It was an incredible miracle! The Church calls this a Eucharistic miracle.

Normally during Mass, we are unable to see the physical change from bread and wine to the Body and Blood of Christ. We have faith that the change takes place. But at this particular moment in time God decided to show the world what happens during every Mass.

Today, you can travel to Lanciano, Italy, where the miracle took place and see the flesh and the blood from that miracle over a thousand years ago.

Every time you go to Mass, the change from bread and wine to the Body and Blood of Jesus occurs. Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. This is an incredible gift! You are blessed to be able to receive Jesus in the Eucharist.



From the Bible: The Last Supper

On the night before he died Jesus gathered his disciples for one last meal together. It was the Jewish feast of Passover.

While they were together at the table Jesus spoke to them about how he was going to be betrayed and suffer.

Then while they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take this, all of you, and eat it; this is my Body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Take this, all of you, and drink from it; this is the cup of my Blood, which will be poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins.”

When they had finished their meal, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Adapted from Matthew 26:26–30

This is known as the Last Supper, the most famous meal in the history of the world. At the Last Supper Jesus did something incredible. He turned ordinary bread and wine into his Body and Blood. The Last Supper was the first Eucharist, and the disciples’ First Communion.

There in that room two thousand years ago, Jesus gave himself to the disciples. And every time we receive the Eucharist he gives himself to us in the same way!

Jesus wants to be invited into your life. He wants to be your friend. He wants to encourage you, guide you, listen to you, and love you. Jesus wants to help you become the-best-version-of-yourself, grow in virtue, and live a holy life. You are blessed!



Jesus Is in You

After you receive Jesus in the Eucharist you will make your way back to your seat. At this moment, Jesus is in you. Amazing!

If Jesus came to visit you at your house, imagine how you would prepare for his arrival, imagine how excited you would be for him to get there, and imagine how you would sit by him and listen to everything he had to say.

Well, not only does Jesus come to visit us in the Mass, but he makes his home within us when we receive the Eucharist. So, when you get back to your seat after receiving Jesus in the Eucharist, this is a very special time of prayer.

Kneel or sit down, close your eyes, and talk to Jesus in your heart. This is a very special moment. Jesus is inside you. Thank him for all the ways he has blessed you. Count your blessings, one by one, with Jesus.

The Eucharist energizes and nourishes your soul. You receive many gifts each time you receive the Eucharist. This is a short list of some of those gifts:

Friendship with Jesus

Desire to do the will of God

Cleansing of venial sin

Hunger for virtue

Grace to avoid sin in the future

A heart that listens to the Holy Spirit

Desire to know and love God

Your First Communion is a very important moment in your life, but every time we receive Jesus in the Eucharist is an incredible gift that we should never take for granted.



The Concluding Rites

After we have had a few quiet minutes of prayer with Jesus, it is time for the final prayer and blessing.

Priest: May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen!

Priest or Deacon: Go forth, the Mass is ended.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

In the final blessing we are being sent forth. Sent to do what? God's work in the world. At the end of Mass, God sends you out on a mission. He has fed you with his Word and the Eucharist. He has provided you with everything you need to bring his love to the world you live in.

You are blessed and God wants you to go out into the world and share your blessings with others.



Show What You Know

True or False

1. _____ One of the great blessings God wants to share with you is the Eucharist.
2. _____ The Eucharist is uniquely Catholic.
3. _____ The bread and wine don't become the Body and Blood of Jesus.
4. _____ Our souls are not nourished by the Eucharist.
5. _____ Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist.

Fill in the blank

1. There are _____ of blessings God wants to shower upon you.
2. The _____ is food for your soul.
3. You are so blessed to be _____.
4. Receiving Holy Communion is an incredible _____ that we should never take for granted.
5. You are on a great _____ with God and your destination is _____.

6. The consecration is the moment when the bread and wine become the _____ and _____ of Jesus.
7. To consecrate the bread and wine, the priest says the same words Jesus used during the _____.
8. God fills you with _____ so that you can go into the world and share it with everyone who crosses your path.
9. God _____ you so much that he sent his son, Jesus, so that you could have eternal life!
10. You are _____ and God wants you to go out into the world and share your _____ with others.

Word Bank

CATHOLIC	HEAVEN
BODY	BLOOD
BLESSINGS	JOURNEY
LAST SUPPER	LOVES
THOUSANDS	EUCCHARIST
PEACE	BLESSED
GIFT	



Journal with Jesus

Dear Jesus,

I know you will never leave me because . . .



Closing Prayer

There is so much to be discovered about the Mass. You could spend a lifetime going to Mass every single day, and at the end of your life still be surprised by the beautiful meaning behind everything we do and say at Mass.

Our God is a God of surprises. We can never put limits on what he is capable of or how his love can transform something ordinary, like bread and wine, into something truly extraordinary, like the Body and Blood of Jesus.

**Lord, catch me off guard today.
Surprise me with some moment
of beauty or pain.**

**So that at least for the moment I may be
startled into seeing that you are here in all your splendor,
always and everywhere, barely hidden, beneath, beyond,
within this life I breathe.**

Amen.

Frederick Buechner

