

The Eucharist and the Old Testament

Year of the Eucharist and St. Joseph 2021

I. Manna from Heaven – Exodus 16:1-36

- The people have a longing for Egyptian food, which is a longing to return to our old way of life and ingratitude for the gifts of God. Eucharist means “thanksgiving.”
- They get bread in the morning and flesh in the evening, but the Eucharist is the bread that is flesh.
- Manna is from the Hebrew word, “man,” literally meaning “What is it?” It was a mysterious type of food.
- It tasted like wafers made with honey, and they were travelling to the “land of milk and honey.” It was a foretaste or reminder of the Promised Land.
- In the Talmud the rabbis said that the miracle of the manna would return when the Messiah came.

See John 6:30-34

- The Old Manna is miraculous bread from heaven that preserves earthly life.
- The New Manna allows us to live forever.

How does the manna symbolize the Eucharist?

Bonus: Moses took some of the manna and put it in a jar in the Ark of the Covenant. The manna normally goes bad after one day, but this manna stayed good. It was not to eat, but to look at. We place the Eucharist in a gold box, the tabernacle, and we bring it out to look at it in adoration.

II. The Bread of the Presence – 1 Samuel 21:1-9

- The “holy bread” is described in Leviticus 24:5-9.
- They must have “kept themselves from women.” This is a reference to the priesthood, as Levitical Priests, although they were married, were required to keep continent during their turn serving in the Temple. David and his companions also keep continent before going on a military expedition.
- It is called “Bread of the Presence.”

Jesus makes a reference to this in Mark 2:23-28.

- Comparing Himself to King David and the apostles to David’s companions.
- They are on a holy expedition, doing the work of God.
- They have a priestly character, and it is lawful for priests to do God’s work on the Sabbath.
- The Sabbath is about entering into God’s rest, and the Eucharist is a foretaste of heaven.

How does the Bread of the Presence symbolize the Eucharist?

III. Multiplication of the Loaves – 2 Kings 4:42-44

- The Prophet Elisha prophesies that the 20 loaves of barley bread will be enough for 100 men with some left over.

See John 6:1-14

- Jesus feeds the 5,000 men with 5 loaves of barley bread with some left over.

How does the multiplication of loaves symbolize the Eucharist?

IV. Food for the Journey – 1 Kings 19:1-8

- King Ahab threatens Elijah's life, so he runs away in despair.
- An angel brings Him bread and water, saying, "Arise and eat, else the journey will be too great for you."
- Walked for 40 days and 40 nights to Horeb, the mount of God, where he had an encounter with the Presence of God.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 1524-5, "In addition to the Anointing of the Sick, the Church offers those who are about to leave this life the Eucharist as viaticum. Communion in the body and blood of Christ, received at this moment of "passing over" to the Father, has a particular significance and importance. It is the seed of eternal life and the power of resurrection, according to the words of the Lord: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." The sacrament of Christ once dead and now risen, the Eucharist is here the sacrament of passing over from death to life, from this world to the Father. Thus, just as the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist form a unity called "the sacraments of Christian initiation," so too it can be said that Penance, the Anointing of the Sick and the Eucharist as viaticum constitute at the end of Christian life "the sacraments that prepare for our heavenly homeland" or the sacraments that complete the earthly pilgrimage."

How does Elijah's bread from the angel symbolize the Eucharist?

Homework

Read and reflect on Isaiah 25:6-9. How is Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled in the Eucharist?