





## Chapter X

# The Eucharist In the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints





## Why can we say that the Blessed Mary's entire life was Eucharistic?



Even before the Sacrament of the Eucharist was instituted, Mary lived her whole life in a Eucharistic spirit. Various events in her life testify to this fact.





**In the Annunciation** Our Lady offered her virginal womb for the Incarnation of Jesus, the Word of God. For nine months the Virgin was the living tabernacle of God. By her *Immaculate Conception* and her *fullness of Grace*, Mary is a model for us and she inaugurates the Church's participation in the Sacrifice of the Redeemer.

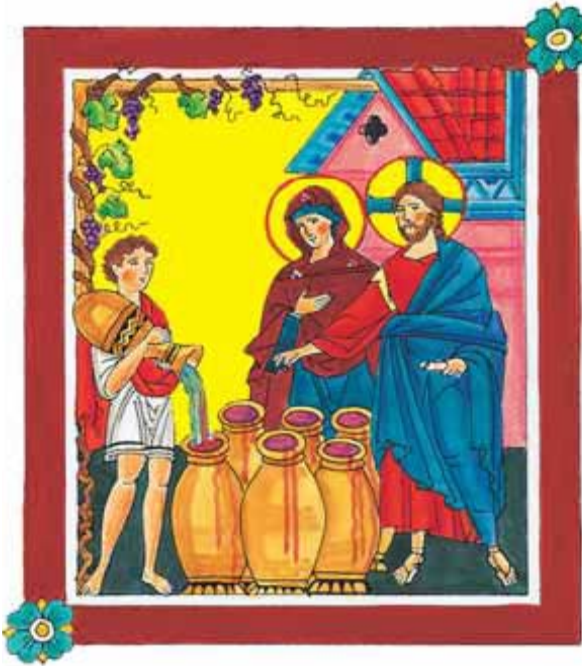


**After the birth of Jesus** Mary did a gesture that we can describe as being both Eucharistic and Ecclesial when she presented the child Jesus to the shepherds, to the Magi and to the High Priest in the temple. She offered the blessed fruit of her womb to the People of God and to the Gentiles so they could adore him and recognize him as the Messiah.





At the wedding feast of Cana we see a similar act in her presence and caring intervention on the occasion of the first sign and miracle worked by her Son.



On Calvary we see that the Virgin Mother also did a similar gesture at the foot of the Cross as she shared in the sufferings of her Son and united herself fully to the sacrificial gift of the Savior. She then takes his body in her arms and places it in a tomb like a hidden seed of resurrection and of new life for the salvation of the world.





At Pentecost the presence of Mary was also a Eucharistic and Ecclesial gift to the Church.



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In what sense is Mary an icon (an image) of the Eucharistic Church?



In the life of Mary of Nazareth there is a most sublime expression of the reality that:



not only is there an exclusive relationship between Mother and the Son of God who took flesh and blood from her body and blood.





but there is also an intimate relationship that unites the Church and the Eucharist because the Most Holy Virgin is a model and representation of the Church whose life and mission have their source in the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.



Just like the Virgin Mary, so too the Church makes the Lord Jesus present through the celebration of the Eucharist and gives him to all so that they may have life in abundance.







Like Mary, the Church, too, is called to become a living offering pleasing to the Father.



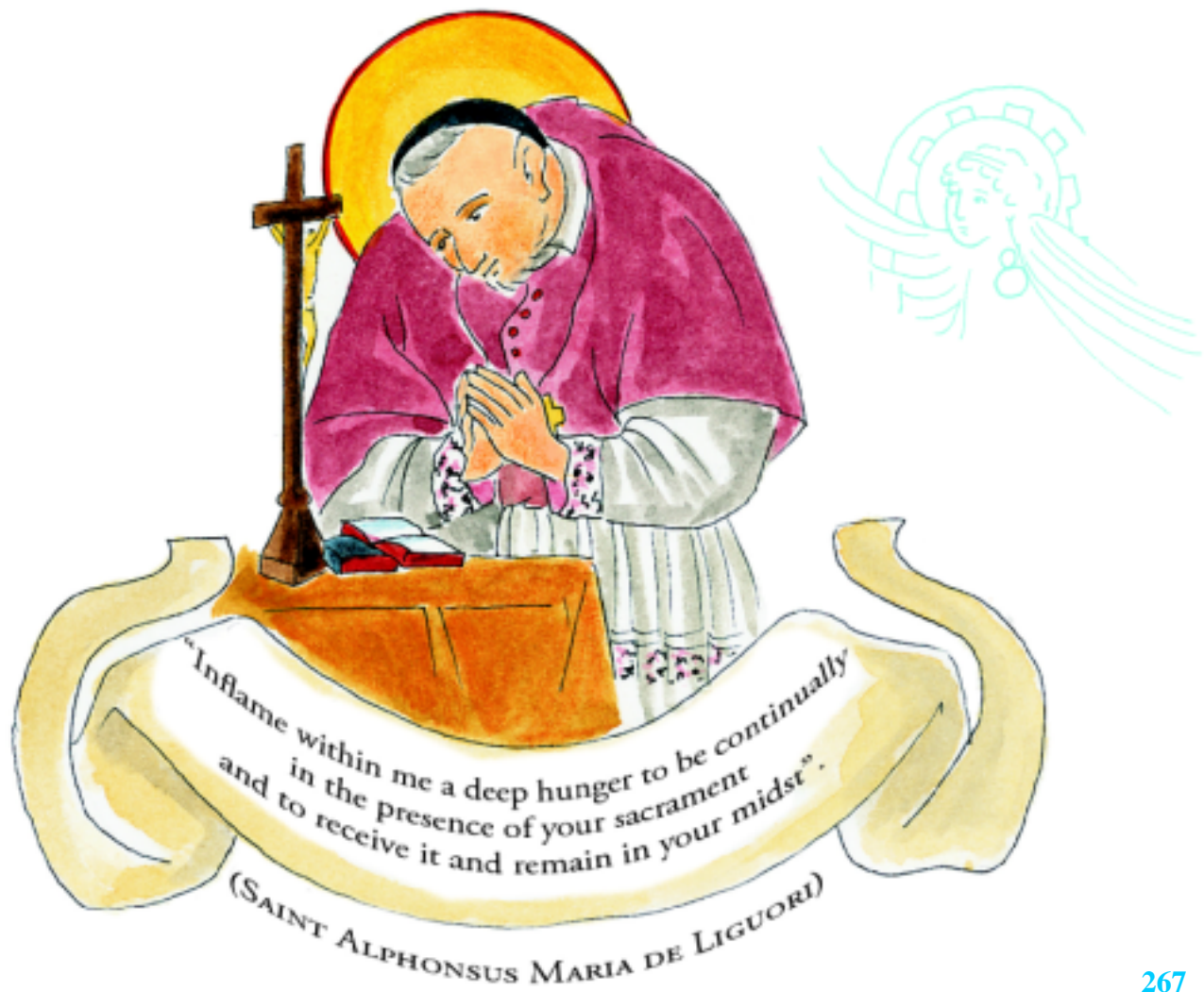
In the Eucharistic Celebration, along with the memorial of the death of Christ, we always receive, in a certain way, the gift of Mary, the gift the Crucified One gave in the person of John, (“**Behold your Mother**”: *Jn* 19,27). “It means accepting – like John – the one who is given to us anew as our Mother. It also means taking on a commitment to be conformed to Christ, putting ourselves at the school of his Mother and allowing her to accompany us. Mary is present, with the Church and as the Mother of the Church, at each of our celebrations of the Eucharist. If the Church and the Eucharist are inseparably united, the same ought to be said of Mary and the Eucharist” (JOHN PAUL II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 57). This is one reason why, since ancient times, the commemoration of Mary has always been part of the Eucharistic celebrations of the Churches of East and West

## Why are the Saints witnesses to the Eucharistic life?



The Saints are witnesses to the Eucharistic life because they witness that the Eucharist makes us holy and that there can be no holiness that is not centered on a strong Eucharistic life. Jesus says: **“The one who feeds on me will live because of me”** (Jn 6, 57).

Some saints experienced this dimension with particular intensity and received special gifts of the Spirit, inspiring the same fervent love in their brothers and sisters the same love for the Eucharist. There are numerous examples we could mention: from Saint Ignatius of Antioch to Saint Ambrose, from Saint John Chrysostom to Saint Augustine, from Saint Anthony (Abbot) to Saint Benedict, from Saint Francis of Assisi to Saint Thomas Aquinas, from Saint Catherine of Siena to Saint Clare of Assisi, from Saint Teresa of Avila to Saint Teresa of Calcutta, from Saint Bernard to Saint Alphonsus Maria Liguori, from Saint Peter Julian Eymard to Saint Pius of Pietrelcina, even to the “Martyrs of the Eucharist”, ancient and modern, from Saint Tarcisus to Saint Nicola Pieck and companions, to Saint Peter Maldonado. And this is just to mention but a few from a very long list.





“Remember that the more you allow Mary to be active when you receive Communion, the more Jesus is glorified; the more you will allow Mary to act through Jesus and Jesus in Mary, the more you will be in a state of profound humility and it is there that you will listen in peace and silence, without having to worry or to see, to taste, to feel, since the good man everywhere lives by faith, especially in Holy Communion, which is an act of faith”

(SAINT LOUIS M. GRIGNION DE MONTFORT).



“The Mass is the spiritual food that sustains me and without which I could not live a single day or a single hour of my life; in the Mass we have Jesus under the form of bread, while in the background we can see Christ and touch him in the broken bodies and in the abandoned childrer”

(BLESSED MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA).



(SAINT AMBROSE)



Only the Church can offer the Creator this pure oblation (the Eucharist), offering what comes from his creation with a spirit of thanksgiving.

(SAINT IRENAEUS)



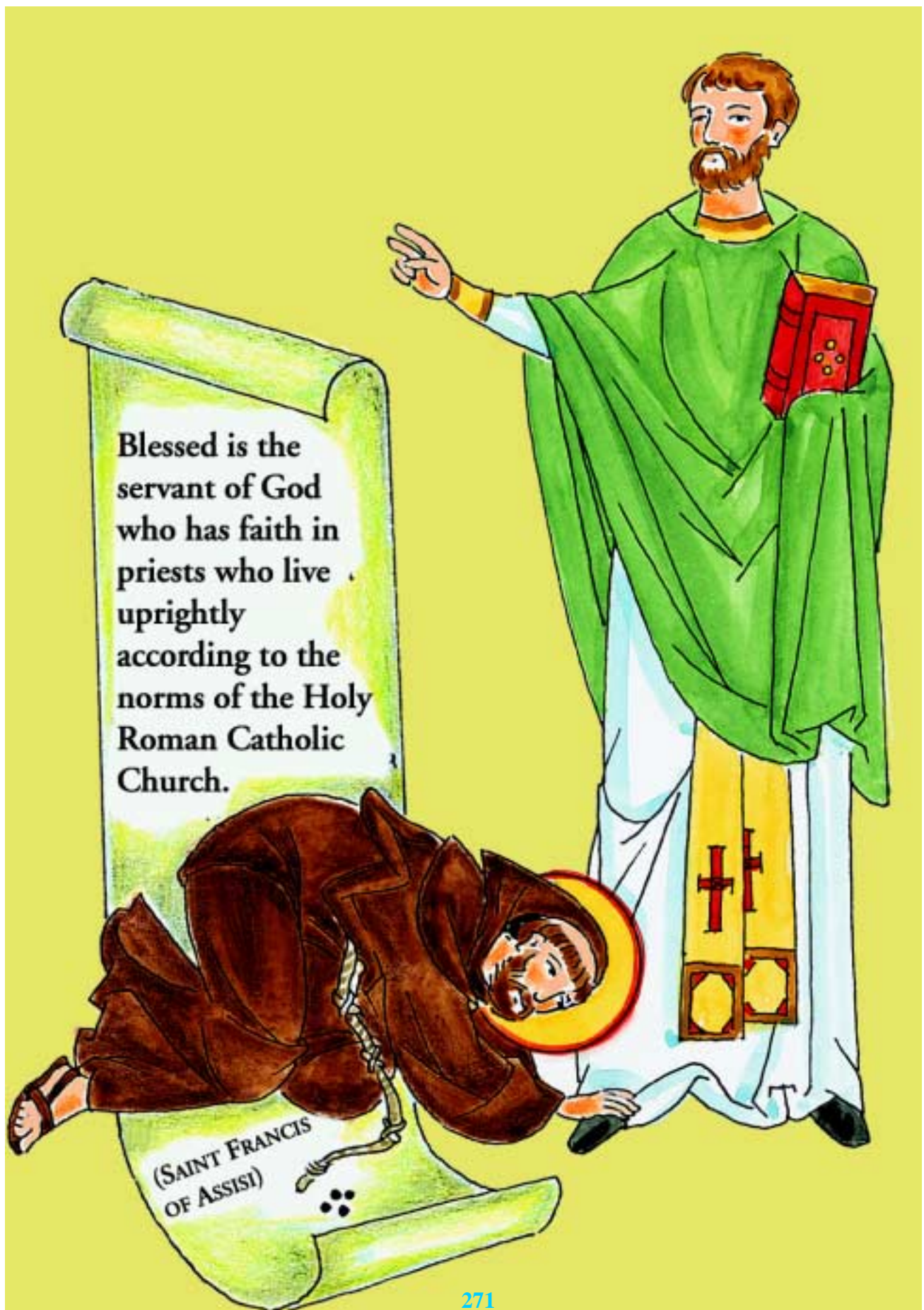
St. Gemma Galgani was not able to close her eyes at the thoughts of being able to receive the Holy Eucharist day after day. “Imagining there to be an academy in Heaven, she said, the only thing that was to be learned was how to love. The school is in the upper room, the Master is Jesus, the teachings are his Body and Blood”.



«In the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, in this Sacrament of Love, we have true life, life that is blessed, true happiness because in it we receive not only the graces that make us complete but we also the Author of these graces himself»

(SAINT PIUS OF PIETRELcina).









# Bibliography

NB: For further information about the topics discussed, please see the following documents:



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