

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

On the night before His crucifixion, Christ instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion as His last will and testament, to be faithfully observed until His return on the Last Day. Known by various names—Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper, the Lord's Table, Holy Eucharist, and the Breaking of Bread—this sacrament holds a special place in Christian worship and symbolism.

Christian iconography has depicted Holy Communion in many forms: a chalice with a ciborium (containers for wine and wafers) or a chalice with the host rising from it. The dual symbols of wheat and grapes shown here represent the elements used: bread made from flour and wine, the fruit of the vine.

Together with Holy Baptism, Holy Communion is one of two sacraments ordained by Christ. In these sacred acts, Christ, through outward signs combined with His Word, offers, grants, and affirms the grace He has won for all believers. In Holy Communion, the consecrated bread and wine, consumed in a natural manner, convey Christ's true body and blood in a supernatural way—a concept known as sacramental eating and drinking.

Scripture speaks of a "koinonia" (communion, fellowship, togetherness) between the blessed bread and wine and Christ's true body and blood. Though the elements remain physically bread and wine, in the sacrament—the act of eating and drinking in Holy Communion—Christ's true body and blood are truly received. This mystery is known as the doctrine of the Real Presence.

In Holy Communion, all who partake receive the Lord's body and blood. For believers it strengthens faith, assures forgiveness of sins, and fosters growth in holy living.