

Living Faith

# Living Bread



A 40-Day Devotional  
**Celebrating the Eucharist**

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**A 40-DAY DEVOTIONAL  
CELEBRATING THE EUCHARIST**

From beloved authors of *Living Faith*  
past and present

**Living Faith**  
Daily Catholic Devotions

# An Introduction

## “Do this in memory of me.” — Jesus

These familiar words from Jesus, based in Scripture and recalled at every Mass during the Eucharistic Prayer, are the reason for this 40-day devotional celebrating the Eucharist.

The U.S. Bishops are inviting the Church to pursue deeper knowledge and love for the Eucharist through revivals locally in each diocese and nationally with a Eucharistic Congress in 2024. In celebration of this, *Living Faith*, long treasured for its daily Catholic devotions based on the readings of the Mass, is pleased to present this special edition of *Living Faith* reflections devoted to Jesus in the Eucharist: *Living Bread*.

Penned through the decades by numerous *Living Faith* authors past and present, *Living Bread* invites readers to increase their love and devotion to the Eucharist. Inside, you'll walk with writers whose love for the Word of God is matched by their belief that the true Living Bread—Jesus Christ, the Word-Made-Flesh—is the food that fuels a vibrant living faith.

Perfect to start at any time of the Church Year, this perennial page-a-day devotional may be read whenever a reader wishes to dive in! Two articles are included at the back of booklet. They offer tips for increasing one's eucharistic devotion and unpack the *Catechism's* teaching on the Eucharist's connection to our future glory!

■ PAT GOHN  
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR  
*LIVING FAITH*

## Living Bread

*I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever.*

JOHN 6:51

“Bread is the staff of life.” My husband certainly agrees with this proverb. For him, a meal isn’t complete without bread. However, he knows that such bread will last but a few hours. As a daily communicant, he relies on the Living Bread that came down from heaven. He wants to live forever.

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Who doesn’t want to gain eternal life? For many, daily Mass is not possible, yet remembering that the home is the “domestic church,” when we gather at table, say the blessing and break bread that nourishes our bodies, we are reminded of God’s loving care in providing our daily bread throughout the week. Thus, we see that the bread we eat in our “church of the home” sustains us the six days until Sunday when we gather at Mass and receive the Eucharist—food for our soul.

**Jesus, may we be ever grateful that you are the Living Bread, the bread of eternal life.**

■ JUDY SCHUENEMAN

# Going to the House of the Lord

*I rejoiced because they said to me,  
“We will go up to the house of the LORD.”*

PSALM 122:1

I often reflect on these opening words of Psalm 122 on my way to celebrate Sunday Mass.

I am going to the house of the Lord, and I rejoice in the thoughts of what will take place. I will greet many people I haven't seen for a week. We will exchange smiles, say hello and prepare to pray and sing together. Then we will all listen to the day's teachings of Scripture and share the homily. In one united voice, we will profess our common faith.

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In the blessing and breaking of the bread and the reception of the holy Eucharist, we experience that collective sense of awe, truly rejoicing that the Lord is present at this sacred banquet.

At the end of Mass, we go forth on our various missions to carry the love and spirit of Jesus into our homes, neighborhoods and places of work. We are called to this sacred gathering to express gratitude for salvation and rejoice in the spirit of eternal love.

**Lord, may we always go to your house with an open, friendly and rejoicing spirit.**

■ FR. JAMES MCKARNS

# The Mystery of the Eucharist

*You spread the table before me...  
my cup overflows.*

PSALM 23:5

Pope St. Pius X encouraged children to receive Communion at the age of reason. Every August 21, on his feast day, I always think of all the second graders I prepared for that sacrament when I was a young Sister. In their white dresses and veils or blue slacks and white shirts, they seemed the holiest persons on earth for that important day.

May this banquet  
in which Christ  
becomes my food  
bring me closer  
to him and to all  
persons.

The image of a bountiful table spread before me brings back all those little ones again, walking up the middle aisle of church, hands folded to receive the Divine Shepherd for the first time. Since my own First Communion as a child, how many blessed opportunities I have had to come to that table. May this banquet in which Christ becomes my food bring me closer to him and to all persons. I am sorry for any times I have come to this sacrament in a routine or distracted manner.

Even though now I think I know a little bit more about the mystery of the Eucharist and how we become one in Christ by sharing his love with others, I need God's help to be as present as I can to this sublime mystery. I pray for that grace. My cup overflows!

■ SR. MARGUERITE ZRALEK, O.P.

## Bread for the Journey

...strengthened by that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God...

1 KINGS 19:8

In a former career, I made handmade specialty bread at a neighborhood bakery. A dear friend told me on more than one occasion in those days, “What you do is so life-affirming!” Now in parish ministry years later, I have had the privilege of preparing children for First Communion and—more recently—accompanying our pastor on sick calls. When possible, in addition to the Anointing of the Sick, we bring Communion.

In a situation when the person is near death, the Church refers to this beautiful eucharistic encounter as *viaticum*. The Blessed Sacrament is the spiritual provision we take “on the way.” The Body of our Lord is living bread, nourishment for our earthly journey and especially for our passing over to eternal life. As we receive Communion and “taste and see the goodness of the Lord,” may we find in the Eucharist Jesus, who affirms, strengthens and accompanies us on the way.

The Blessed Sacrament is the spiritual provision we take “on the way.”

■ STEVE PABLE

## A Gift Beyond All Others

*Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.*

JOHN 6:26-27

Just as the people in the Gospel received the loaves, so we too have received material benefits from God. The temptation is to get lost in the gifts and to miss their deeper meaning. Every gift reveals the love of the one who gives it, and that is the most important part of the gift. This is what Jesus wanted the people to understand.

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Jesus' giving of the loaves preceded his giving of the Eucharist. The people in the Gospel story could not have seen this at the time, but they could have seen God's providential love in the giving of the bread. The material gifts of nature that nourish us are a continual revelation of God's love for us, and yet this pales in comparison to the gift of Jesus' presence, which he gives to us in the Eucharist.

**Lord, may I sense your love shining through your gifts, and may I have a deeper appreciation for your eucharistic food that endures for eternal life.**

■ FR. KENNETH E. GRABNER, C.S.C.



## Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament

*Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."*

JOHN 6:35

A follower of St. Francis, Clare left all to live a life of poverty in Our Lord's service. She became the foundress of the Poor Clares, a contemplative Franciscan religious order. She lived a life of remarkable discipline and holiness.

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always present  
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Sacrament.

Throughout her life she was noted for her reverence and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. When it was thought that the monastery was being attacked, she put the monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament before the soldiers, who, seeing it, then turned away. Let her love for the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist instill a similar response in us.

Our Lord is always present waiting for us to stop in and spend some time praying before the Blessed Sacrament. Too often we merely rush into church on Sunday, just as Mass is about to begin, and leave as soon as the priest is off the altar. We should try to arrive a bit earlier to have a few quiet moments before Mass and then spend some time afterwards in thanksgiving for the magnificent gift of the Eucharist.

**St. Clare, help us cultivate a deep love for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament! Amen.**

■ SR. CAROL ANN KENZ

## How Can I Know Jesus?

*“But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.”*

MATTHEW 16:15-17

Knowing Jesus is critical to our faith. But how can we do this? He no longer walks among us. Ultimately, it is a grace from God, but it is a grace God wants for all. The path will be unique for each, but there are common ways.

We come to know Jesus in the Scriptures because he is the Word. We know Jesus in the breaking of the bread, that is, the Eucharist, as was demonstrated to those on the road to Emmaus. We know Jesus in our brothers and sisters, especially in the least among us. We come to know him in the Holy Spirit that mystically unites us.

You may not think that you know Jesus, but he is likely closer than you imagine. As you meditate on today’s Word, you are opening yourself to him. Jesus’ words to Peter in today’s Gospel are meant for you too: “Blessed are you” because the Father himself has revealed Jesus to you.

You may not think that you know Jesus, but he is likely closer than you imagine.

■ MSGR. STEPHEN ROSSETTI

# Living Bread

*Living Faith*, long treasured for its daily Catholic devotions, is celebrating its 40th anniversary! This happy milestone occurs within the same time frame that the U.S. Bishops are inviting us to participate in Eucharistic revivals locally and nationally. To commemorate this special time within the Church, while honoring our publication's anniversary, *Living Faith* presents this special volume: *Living Bread: A 40-Day Devotional Celebrating the Eucharist*.

Drawing on reflections penned through the decades by numerous *Living Faith* authors, past and present, *Living Bread* invites readers to increase their love and devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist. Perfect for faith-filled reflection focused on the Blessed Sacrament anytime of the year.



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