

SUNDAY to SUNDAY

SAINT OF THE WEEK

BARNABAS

c. First Century

June 11

The story of this early missionary, a Cypriot Jew called Joseph, is told in the Acts of the Apostles. He was named Barnabas ("son of encouragement") by the Twelve Apostles when he sold a piece of his property and gave them the money (4:36-37). He introduced the convert Paul to the apostles (9:27), was officially sent by the Jerusalem Church to Antioch (11:22-26), was set apart with Paul by the Spirit for a mission to Cyprus (13:2), attended the Council of Jerusalem (15:12), and returned to Cyprus with Mark (15:36-41). By tradition, he was martyred there.



CATECHETICAL CORNER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WHY DOES JESUS GIVE HIMSELF TO US AS FOOD AND DRINK?

Jesus gives himself to us in the Eucharist as spiritual nourishment because he loves us. God's whole plan for our salvation is directed to our participation in the life of the Trinity, the communion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our sharing in this life begins with our Baptism, when by the power of the Holy Spirit we are joined to Christ, thus becoming adopted sons and daughters of the Father. It is strengthened and increased in Confirmation. It is nourished and deepened through our participation in the Eucharist. By eating the Body and drinking the Blood of Christ in the Eucharist we become united to the person of Christ through his humanity. . . . In being united to the humanity of Christ we are at the same time united to his divinity. Our mortal and corruptible natures are transformed by being joined to the source of life. . . . By being united to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, we are drawn up into the eternal relationship of love among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As Jesus is the eternal Son of God by nature, so we become sons and daughters of God by adoption through the sacrament of Baptism. Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation (Chrismation), we are temples of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, and by his indwelling we are made holy by the gift of sanctifying grace. The ultimate promise of the Gospel is that we will share in the life of the Holy Trinity. The Fathers of the Church called this participation in the divine life "divinization" (theosis). In this we see that God does not merely send us good things from on high; instead, we are brought up into the inner life of God, the communion among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the celebration of the Eucharist (which means "thanksgiving") we give praise and glory to God for this sublime gift.

WHY IS THE EUCHARIST NOT ONLY A MEAL BUT ALSO A SACRIFICE?

While our sins would have made it impossible for us to share in the life of God, Jesus Christ was sent to remove this obstacle. His death was a sacrifice for our sins. Christ is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). Through his death and resurrection, he conquered sin and death and reconciled us to God. The Eucharist is the memorial of this sacrifice. The Church gathers to remember and to re-present the sacrifice of Christ in which we share through the action of the priest and the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the celebration of the Eucharist, we are joined to Christ's sacrifice and receive its inexhaustible benefits. . . . Jesus' act belongs to human history, for he is truly human and has entered into history. At the same time, however, Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity; he is the eternal Son, who is not confined within time or history. His actions transcend time, which is part of creation. "Passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation" (Heb 9:11), Jesus the eternal Son of God made his act of sacrifice in the presence of his Father, who lives in eternity. Jesus' one perfect sacrifice is thus eternally present before the Father, who eternally accepts it. This means that in the Eucharist, Jesus does not sacrifice himself again and again. Rather, by the power of the Holy Spirit his one eternal sacrifice is made present once again, re-presented, so that we may share in it. . . .

Furthermore, in the eucharistic re-presentation of Christ's eternal sacrifice before the Father, we are not simply spectators. The priest and the worshiping community are in different ways active in the eucharistic sacrifice. The ordained priest standing at the altar represents Christ as head of the Church. All the baptized, as members of Christ's Body, share in his priesthood, as both priest and victim. The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the Church. The Church, which is the Body and Bride of Christ, participates in the sacrificial offering of her Head and Spouse. In the Eucharist, the sacrifice of Christ becomes the sacrifice of the members of his Body who united to Christ form one sacrificial offering (cf. Catechism, no. 1368). As Christ's sacrifice is made sacramentally present, united with Christ, we offer ourselves as a sacrifice to the Father. . . .

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