

# “I am the bread of life.”

John 6:48

By Irene Evans

**What’s the big deal?** As Catholics, the Eucharist is incredibly important to us. People come back to the Church because they miss the Eucharist. People join the Church at Easter because they want to receive what we have – Jesus’ gift of himself in the Eucharist. And those who are unable to receive the Eucharist for various reasons ache because they cannot receive this gift.

## *At Mass, is Jesus only present in Communion?*

No, we believe that Christ is present at Mass in four different ways:

- ◇ in the body and blood of Holy Communion
- ◇ in the priest,
- ◇ in the Word (or scriptures),
- ◇ and in the people who are gathered at Mass.



*For reflection: Which of these ways do I experience Jesus most easily? Which is hardest for me?*



## How does the Eucharist form us into the Body of Christ?

The Church teaches that when we receive Communion, we are transformed into the Body of Christ. I was thinking about this recently and I started wondering, how can we be the Body of Christ when there seem to be so many differences among Catholics? Some Catholics think we should return to the days of the Latin Mass, others that think priests should be allowed to be married, and some don’t like either of those ideas. In our own parishes of St. Matthew and Holy Angels, we disagree over important issues like how we should position our parishes for the future – where we should spend and where we should save. So are we really the Body of Christ? The Church teaches that, in spite of our differences, the Body of Christ encompasses all of us – those we would lay down our life for, and those we’d rather not be in the same room with! I recently realized that when the Eucharistic minister holds up the consecrated host and says, “Body of Christ,” and I respond, “Amen,” I am saying “yes” not only to the real presence of Jesus in the host but also to the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharistic minister and the entire congregation!

### ***How do we prepare to go to communion?***

The Church asks us to fast for one hour before receiving communion (water and medicine are allowed at any time), to be free from mortal sin, and to love our neighbor.

*For Reflection: Which of these is the easiest for me? The hardest?*