

Our Vocabulary of the Eucharist

By Glenn Rymza

The inexhaustible richness of this sacrament is expressed in the different names we give it. Each name points to certain aspects of this mystery.

1. **Eucharist**--because it is an action of thanksgiving to God. The Greek words *eucharistein* and *eulogein* recall the Jewish blessings that proclaim (especially during a meal) God's works: creation, redemption and sanctification (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24; Mt. 26:26; Mk. 14:22).
2. **The Lord's Supper**--because of its connection with the Last Supper, and it anticipates the wedding feast of Heaven (1 Cor. 11:20; Rev. 19:9).
3. **Breaking of Bread**--because Jesus used this rite, part of a Jewish meal, when as master of the table he blessed and distributed the bread, above all at the Last Supper. Also, it was through this action that his disciples will recognize him after his Resurrection, and it is this expression that the first Christians will use to designate their gatherings.
4. **Memorial of the Lord's Passion & Resurrection**. Just like the Passover Meal was a memorial of the Exodus, the Last Supper is a Memorial of Jesus' Passover—his Passion & Resurrection.
5. **Holy Sacrifice**--because it makes present the one sacrifice of Christ. "Sacrifice of praise", "spiritual sacrifice", "pure and holy sacrifice" are also used since it completes and surpasses all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant.
6. **Holy and Divine Liturgy, the Sacred Mysteries**--because the Church's whole liturgy finds its center and most intense expression in the celebration of this sacrament.
7. **Most Blessed Sacrament**--because it is the Sacrament of sacraments. The Eucharist reserved in the tabernacle takes this name.
8. **Holy Communion**--because by this sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ, who makes us sharers in his Body and Blood to form a single body.
9. **Holy Mass (Latin: Missa)**--because the liturgy in which the mystery of salvation is accomplished, ends with the sending forth (*missio*) of the faithful, so that they may fulfill God's will in their daily lives.