The Eucharist Study Questions

1. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, some of the paragraphs that tell us about the Eucharist are contained in CCC 1374-1377. After reading those paragraphs, write down something you found in them that you think is memorable or that speaks to you.

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3. Choose the correct answer: In Matthew 26:26, Jesus says, “This ___________ my body.”
   (a) represents           (b) symbolizes           (c) indicates           (d) is a figure of           (e) is

4. John 6:53-57 is in answer to a question. The Jews asked, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” What words in Jesus’ reply indicate that He wanted them to take Him literally?

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5. Fill in the blanks: 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 says, “Therefore whoever ___________ ___________ ___________ or ___________ ___________ ___________ of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the ___________ and ___________ of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning ___________ ___________, eats and drinks judgment on himself.”

For further study:

“Eucharist” in the Catholic Encyclopedia article • “Christ in the Eucharist” by Catholic Answers
Early Church Fathers on the Eucharist (from “The Real Presence” by Catholic Answers)

110 A.D. - St. Ignatius of Antioch - "[Docetists] abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which that Father, in his goodness, raised up again. They who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes." (Letter to the Smyrnaeans 6:2–7:1)

151 A.D. - St. Justin Martyr - "We call this food Eucharist, and no one else is permitted to partake of it, except one who believes our teaching to be true and who has been [baptized]... For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nurtured, is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnated Jesus." (First Apology 66)

189 A.D. - St. Irenaeus - "If the Lord were from other than the Father, how could he rightly take bread, which is of the same creation as our own, and confess it to be his body and affirm that the mixture in the cup is his blood?" And: "He has declared the cup, a part of creation, to be his own blood, from which he causes our blood to flow; and the bread, a part of creation, he has established as his own body, from which he gives increase unto our bodies." (Against Heresies 4:33–32, 5:2)

217 A.D. - St. Hippolytus - "'[Wisdom] has furnished her table' [Proverbs 9:2]... [This] refers to [Jesus'] honored and undefiled body and blood, which day by day are administered and offered sacrificially at the spiritual divine table, as a memorial of that first and ever-memorable table of the spiritual divine supper [i.e., the Last Supper]." (Fragment from Commentary on Proverbs)

251 A.D. - St. Cyprian - "[Paul] threatens, moreover, the stubborn and forward, and denounces them, saying, 'Whosoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord' [1 Cor. 11:27]. All these warnings being scorned and contemned—[lapsed Christians will often take Communion] before their sin is expiated, before confession has been made of their crime, before their conscience has been purged by sacrifice and by the hand of the priest, before the offense of an angry and threatening Lord has been appeased, [and so] violence is done to his body and blood; and they sin now against their Lord more with their hand and mouth than when they denied their Lord." (The Lapsed 15–16)

390 A.D. - St. Ambrose - "Perhaps you may be saying, 'I see something else; how can you assure me that I am receiving the body of Christ?' It but remains for us to prove it. And how many are the examples we might use! ... Christ is in that sacrament, because it is the body of Christ" (The Mysteries 9:50, 58).

411 A.D. - St. Augustine - "What you see is the bread and the chalice; that is what your own eyes report to you. But what your faith obliges you to accept is that the bread is the body of Christ and the chalice is the blood of Christ." (Sermons, 272)