“The Eucharist is the heart and center of our worshiping life.”

(The Feast of Faith, Pg. 52 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger)

During the persecutions of the early Church, they would meet in the Catacombs for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It was in the Eucharist that these men and women found the strength they needed to remain steadfast in their new found faith.

And so also today, the Eucharist, the Mass is the very center of our lives as Catholic Christians. Take away the Mass and we lose our identity.

Everyone identifies Catholics with the Mass.

So, what is the Mass and why is it so important? “The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life” (Lumen gentium 11).

The Mass is not just some other form of worship. It is much more than some gathering of people to sing “worship” songs, read a few passages of Sacred Scripture and offer prayers.

The Eucharist is worship “in spirit and truth,” for in the Mass, Jesus Christ our High Priest offers Himself to the Eternal Father in THE perfect act of praise. He is the bridge between God and man, giving to God what we cannot give on our own. The Incarnate Word is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”

Old Testament worship, the symbolic offering of a lamb is replaced with the once sacrifice that wipes away sin.

Therefore, the Mass is not about us. It is not about what we do, the music we sing and the prayers that we say. It is about what Christ does on our behalf.

Since the 60’s, many individuals recreated the Catholic Mass to be about the people. We have turned “the community into a self-enclosed circle. In its outward form, it no longer opens out on what lies ahead and above, but is closed in on itself” (Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, The Spirit of the Liturgy, pg. 80).

The Eucharist is about us insofar as it is the saving mysteries of our salvation being offered by the Priest, in the Person of Christ, on our behalf to the Eternal Father.

We do not come to Mass for our self gratification. Many people today say: “I no longer go to church, because I get nothing out of it.” Our purpose for participating in the Mass is to worship God by uniting our lives with Jesus Christ and allowing His transform grace to make us into the “new nature” (Col 3:10), that we have received through Baptismal grace.

May our focus always be on Him who is not only the center of our Faith, but the center of all salvation history.

God bless,
Fr. Finelli