

# Eucharist Talk

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Hi all! My name is Lucas, and I'm another Vas (yes, my dad is here). I'm currently a computer science student at WCSU, and I'm almost 22 years old - give it a couple days.

Last year, I came to this retreat and it was amazing! I met quite a few people, all of which have followed up with me (or me with them) at some point within that year. (people maybe here) Of course, I'm sure you've heard these same sorts of experiences from other people - if nothing else, the people that have given their own talks before me today and yesterday are all former retreat-goers. Personally, I think that really says something about this retreat and how it works. Take advantage of that!

I was asked to give this talk about the Eucharist. Of course, that's something that's integral to what makes anyone Catholic. The Eucharist is a very special thing - of course it looks like a piece of bread to us all the time, but it's something different. It's different enough that it's got it's own liturgy in the mass - literally a whole part of the mass completely dedicated to the worship and consumption of this sacrament - every single mass. I'd say that this should point something out as being super important.

If you're anything like me, though, it really doesn't even matter. You could dedicate the whole mass to it rather than just a chunk. I've had tons of people come up here and tell me about how it's amazing and how it will change your life. Sometimes I think I've heard everything about it that I possibly could have, and everything's started feeling pretty repetitive. "This is the body of Christ!" Yeah, alright, I've heard that one. "This little piece of bread has completely changed my life!" Yep, that's another one that I've already heard too.

In my opinion, hearing about these things doesn't always make it easier to believe in. Even though I'm fairly young in the grand scale of things, I think I'm able to say that this isn't new information. Having someone come up to you and say "They're giving out free stuff over there!" doesn't necessarily mean that you believe them. In fact, you're probably pretty skeptical about that statement because it tends to lead to something that's... we'll say not so great. Think some random guy with a white van kind of not great. It's just not something that we believe until we actually see the sign outside the store that says "free stuff." On top of this sort of skepticism, I'm someone that's really likes to have physical proof in front of me, something that I can see, touch, taste, smell, and/or hear. Sometimes, really all the time, the Eucharist is really good at hiding all of that. If that's the body and blood of Christ, why can't I see the skin? Why can't I taste it?

When I was asked to give this talk, I thought it was an interesting turn of events. Of all the people that could be asked to write this, it's going to be the one person on that last retreat that has a problem with believing in the thing I'm supposed to be writing about? This sounds great. What could go wrong? Not only that, but I'm also supposed to show off the healing power of this sacrament too?

Either way, back in high school (4 *long* years ago) I was someone that I'd say was different. I was obviously just a little less mature, didn't necessarily think out all of my decisions too far, and I was horrible at doing homework. I mean, I'm still pretty bad at doing

homework, but that's besides the point. At some point, I got a girlfriend. Things were great for a while, aaaand then they weren't. There was a bit of a messy breakup right at the end of senior year, roughly 3 days before graduation. Needless to say, I wasn't very focused on the graduation when it happened.

The following summer, originally, would have been great. I was free of high school and I didn't have to do any more homework! Except instead, I was in this sort of depressive state. Now my grandmother has dementia and she's the kind of person that wanders around the whole town. She would walk on the side of the road to... well, who knows where. She didn't really know, no one around her knew, but she was definitely walking. In the end, someone needed to watch her for a while and I was the one asked to do this. Since I was just out of school, didn't know what I was doing or even what I wanted to do with my life, and I was cooped up in my room just playing games all day, I decided that it would probably be a good idea to go out and do something different. I said yes, and then I was shipped off to Maine for about a month.

Things up in Maine were actually really good! The place that my grandmother lives is in a town that's basically in the middle of nowhere, right along the border of Canada. It's all farmland, and it's very quiet. It's the kind of place where sitting outside and just watching grass grow is one of the best activities. So, by this point, I'm up there and I have to find some way to keep myself occupied for a month. I've got a laptop, and I've got my phone, and I've maybe got a couple of books. I'll figure it out.

The issue with this whole month, in the end, wasn't that I went up to Maine. It wasn't that I was quite possibly bored out of my mind. The issue is that while I was up there, I didn't have anyone that was telling me to go to church. And, as someone that wasn't nearly as motivated about it as I am today, that meant that I wasn't going to church at all. I'm sure that there are people here that have skipped church before, and we all know that things happen to pop up that try to drag our attention away from it. That's exactly what happened to me, and I haven't told anyone about it up until this point. It's the only time that I can think of that I've ever missed church, and since then I've never done it again.

The truth is, for the two or three weeks that I didn't go to church, I felt horrible. Worse than I thought I could have. It started to literally feel like some sort of weight on my shoulders, and it was constant. Even though I had tons of time to think about it, I continued to just fill my time with doing anything except that. I tried to write it off as the after-effects of the breakup that happened two months before that point. Of course, that's not really what it was, but I let myself believe it.

During those few weeks, not only did I feel miserable, but weird things started happening. My grandmother started wandering more, and she started wandering at times that were completely ridiculous. One night, she decided that she was going to take a walk. This would have been fine, except for the fact that it was at 2am, and that the people that found her wandering were the cops. On another occasion, and I'm far from proud of this, I ended up yelling at her because of the fact that she kept wandering. It's very rare that

I ever truly yell at anyone, and this one felt even worse because it was like yelling at a 3 year old - they're not going to get anything out of that.

Finally, at the end of my month-long retreat(?) my family came up and brought me back home. Of course, there were other things that happened like placing my grandmother in a memory care facility and such. However, I was really just happy that I was back home.

The next week, we all go to church as a family. As soon as I stepped into the building I realized exactly what I was missing all those weeks. We go through the mass, do the motions, and I came out of that church feeling like I just walked out of confession. That weight that was present the whole time I was in Maine just completely lifted off of me and I was able to be who I wanted to be again. Since that day, I haven't missed a single week of mass, and I've actually tried to get a friend or two back in to it.