1. **1 Corinthians 11:23**

* Who gave this message to Paul according to the scriptures?
* Explain how this could be, considering Paul himself was not one of the twelve original Apostles who walked with Jesus Christ? When could this have happened?
* **Acts 9:1-6**
* Who spoke to Paul in this reading?
* **2nd Corinthians 12:1-4**
* Who do you think Paul is speaking about here, that is, who is this person who “was caught up to the third heaven” and “heard ineffable things”?
* What is significant about “the third heaven” according to your knowledge?
* Read this short excerpt from the **Testament of Levi** (this text is **not canonical** but gives us a glimpse of some peculiar speculations present in history long ago):

*“And from the Lord's portion shall be thy life, and He shall be thy field and vineyard, and fruits, gold, and silver. Hear, therefore,* ***regarding the heavens*** *which have been shown to thee. The* ***lowest*** *is for this cause gloomy unto thee, in that it beholds all the unrighteous deeds of men. And it has fire, snow, and ice made ready for the day of judgement, in the righteous judgement of God; for in it are all the spirits of the retributions for vengeance on men. And in the* ***second*** *are the hosts Of the armies which are ordained for the day of judgement, to work vengeance on the spirits of deceit and of Beliar. And* ***above them*** *are the* ***holy ones****. And in the highest of all dwelleth the* ***Great Glory****, far* ***above all holiness****.”*

* According to the **Testament of Levi** what exists from the third level of heaven and onward?
* Is this ideal of levels of Heaven new to you?
* Read the **footnote** for **2nd Corinthians 12:1-4** to the group.
* Share your thoughts about the **footnote** and excerpt from the **Testament of Levi**…

1. **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

* When do we hear these words proclaimed?
* **Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20**
* Which account do you feel sounds closest to Paul’s words in **1st Corinthians**?
* Look back at **verse 25** in **1st** **Corinthians**, what is the purpose of participating “often” in this celebration?
* **Exodus 20:24**
* Review multiple versions of the Bible for **verse 24** in **Exodus** to see how it is translated in various versions of the Bible.
* What is the purpose of offering the sacrifice to God according to the book of **Exodus**?
* Compare this reading from **Exodus** to Christ’s words in **Luke 22:19** and **1st** **Corinthians 11:25**, what similarities do you find?
* When do we as Catholics proclaim **verse 26** in **1st Corinthians**?
* Read these writings from the early Church / Church Fathers.
* **St. Irenaeus of Lyons (115-202 AD)** *Against Heresies Book V, chapter 2*

When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the EUCHARIST of the BLOOD and the BODY of Christ is MADE.

And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the **Word of God**, becomes the **EUCHARIST**, which is the **BODY** and **BLOOD** of **CHRIST**; so also our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, **shall rise at their appointed time.**

* **St. Jerome** **( 342 – 420 AD)** *LETTER LXXI.: TO LUCINIUS* *2-10* ( 398 A.D.)

You ask me whether you **ought to fast on the Sabbath** and to receive the **eucharist** **daily according to the custom**--as currently reported--of the churches of **Rome** and **Spain**. Both these points have been treated by the eloquent Hippolytus, and several writers have collected passages from different authors bearing upon them. The best advice that I can give you is this. **Church-traditions**--especially when they do not run counter to the faith--**are to be observed** in the form in which **previous generations have handed them down**; and the use of one church is not to be annulled because it is contrary to that of another. As regards fasting, I wish that we could practice it without intermission as--according to the Acts of the Apostles Paul did and the believers with him even in the season of **Pentecost** and on the **Lord's Day**. They are not to be accused of manichism, for carnal food ought not to be preferred before spiritual. As regards the **holy eucharist** you may **receive** it at **all times without qualm of conscience or disapproval from me**. You may listen to the **psalmist's** **words**:--"**O taste and see that the Lord is good**;" **you** may **sing** as he does:--"**my heart poureth forth a good word**." But do not mistake my meaning. You are not to fast on feast-days, neither are you to abstain on the week days in Pentecost. In such matters each province may follow its own inclinations, and the **traditions which have been handed down should be regarded as apostolic laws**.

* **Didache Chapter 9 (50-70 AD).** *The Thanksgiving (Eucharist) 1-5*

Now concerning the Thanksgiving (**Eucharist**), thus give thanks. First, concerning the cup: We thank you, our Father, for the holy vine of David Your servant, which You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant; to You be the glory forever. And concerning the broken bread: We thank You, our Father, for the life and knowledge which You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant; to You be the glory forever. Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Your kingdom; for Yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever. **But let no one eat or drink of your Thanksgiving (Eucharist), but they who have been baptized into the name of the Lord**;

* **St. Justin Martyr (103-165 AD)** *on the Eucharist and Mass 66-67.4*

And this food is called among us Eucharisti'a [the **Eucharist**], of which **no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true**, and who has been **washed** with the washing that is for the **remission of sins**, and unto regeneration, and who is so **living as Christ has enjoined**. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.

For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood;" and gave it to them alone. And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and **the people assent, saying AMEN**; **and there is a distribution to each**, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to **those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons**.

* **John 6:54**
* What belief can you find in **John’s** **Gospel** and the writings of **St. Irenaeus**?
* Consider the words highlighted in these early church writings on the Eucharist, share what we as Catholic state before receiving the Eucharist (see end of **St. Justin Martyr**).
* Google “Etymology of Amen” and share what you find out about this word with the group.
* What where the conditions for someone to receive the Eucharist according to the **Didache** and **St. Justin Martyr** during the first 2 centuries of the Church ?
* Look over the writing from **St. Jerome** and state if anything sounds familiar to you in it.
* **Catechism** section **1345**
* Does it seem the teaching on the Eucharist has changed much from the 1st and 2nd centuries of the church unto now according to what you know and have read thus far in this study?
* Share something that stood out and was meaningful to you in today’s study with the group.