

Eucharist as Unity of the Church



"Many grains, one loaf."

Augustine preaches to those who have been brought into the Church at Easter in *Sermons 227, 229, 229A and 272*. He likens each person to a grain of wheat. In any loaf there are many grains. These grains were threshed by the work of many oxen when the gospel was preached to them.

The grains were stored in barns when as catechumens they were held back from participation in the Eucharist. The grains were ground by fasting and the exorcisms such as we would know in the Scrutinies. They were moistened by the waters of baptism and thus shaped into the one loaf. They were baked in the fire of

the Holy Spirit into the Lord's loaf of bread. The wine similarly represents the oneness of heart and soul as the many grapes are pressed into the one cup.

"Body of Christ."

Augustine tells the new members that they are now on the table and in the cup along with all the faithful as he quotes from *1 Corinthians 12:27* "You are the body of Christ and individually members of it." When they hear the words "Body of Christ", "Blood of Christ", they say "Amen" because they give their assent to who they are.

Augustine tells them "to be what you see and receive what you are" *Sermon 272* and to live as the body of Christ so that their Amen will be true. The Eucharist is the sign of unity, the bond of our very community. It is the place in which we see the other and encounter the Christ, in which we see ourselves and agree to allow Christ to be our head and we to be His Body.

(from <http://www.augnet.org/en/works-of-augustine/his-ideas/theology/2339-eucharist/>)