



ST THOMAS AQUINAS SEMINARY

*Continuing the Call of Jesus, the response
of His first disciples, and their communion of life.*

Rector: The Most Rev Dr Felix Gibbins OSB Cam

Essential Theological Enquiry for Prospective Seminarians

Dear Candidate,

The Blessed Sacrament holds a principal place in Catholic theology and liturgical practice, representing the profound mystery of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. For seminarians and prospective incardinated clergy, engaging with theological questions surrounding this sacrament is essential not only for academic growth but also for pastoral application. Below is a range of theology questions that encourage deep reflection and critical analysis of the Blessed Sacrament.

Please select one question from the following list to answer as part of your application for vocational discernment. You may provide quotation from respected sources, both online, journal and published works by noted theologians. Please cite evidence for material quoted, including date of publication, title of work, author and page number. For online material please provide a full copy of the link used in your essay.

Your answer must be your own work and you can use the material provided by the seminary thus far, including the Code of Canon Law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Word limit: 1,250 words. This word limit must not include your bibliography.

Essay Questions:

1. Historical Development: How has the understanding of the Eucharist developed from the Early Church through the Middle Ages to contemporary theology? Discuss key theological figures and councils that have shaped this evolution.
2. Transubstantiation: Analyse the concept of transubstantiation as articulated by the Council of Trent. What philosophical underpinnings support this doctrine, and how has it been received or challenged by modern theologians?
3. Sacrificial Nature: In what ways does the Eucharist embody the understanding of Christ's sacrifice? How do different theological perspectives interpret the Eucharist as a re-presentation of the sacrifice of Jesus?

4. Communal Aspect: Explore the significance of the Eucharist in the context of ecclesiology. How does the celebration of the Blessed Sacrament contribute to this the unity and identity of the Church community?
5. Liturgical Practices: Examine the role of the liturgy in relation to the Blessed Sacrament. How do the various rites and ceremonies influence the theological understanding of the Eucharist among different Christian denominations?
6. Theological Implications: What are the implications of believing in the Real Presence for Catholic moral theology? Discuss how this belief informs ethical decisions and community life.
7. Eucharistic Adoration: Evaluate the theological and spiritual dimensions of Eucharistic adoration. What does this practice communicate about the nature of God and our relationship with Him.
8. Impact of Ecumenism: How does contemporary ecumenical dialogue challenge or affirm the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist? What are the implications for inter-denominational relations within Christianity?
9. Children and the Eucharist: Discuss the ethical considerations surrounding the First Communion of children. What theological insights guide the preparation of children for their first reception of the Blessed Sacrament?
10. Theological Controversies: Analyse a contemporary theological controversy related to the Eucharist (e.g., open communion policies, the reception of communion by divorced and remarried individuals). How do differing opinions reflect broader theological divides within Christianity?

In Christ's Service,




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