



From the Pastor
23rd Sunday in
Ordinary Time - C
Sept. 4, 2022

EUCHARIST IS THE REAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST.

In part 5 of our series on the **US Catholic Bishops'** document, **The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church**, which will guide their three-

year **National Eucharistic Revival** which began last June, we reflect on the one of three essential truths about the **Eucharist**: it is the **Real Presence of Christ**. Last week we addressed the **Sacrifice of Christ** and in two weeks we'll reflect on **Communion with Christ and the Church**. To read past articles on this **Revival**, the whole document, or the free study guide, go to our Parish website: **stjustin.org** and click on **National Eucharistic Revival Bulletin Articles**.

Eucharistic Adoration Oration #1 of 6

Lord our God, in this great Sacrament,
we come into the presence of
Jesus Christ, your Son, born of the Virgin Mary
and crucified for our salvation.
May we who declare our faith
in this fountain of love and mercy
drink from it the water of everlasting life.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE BREAD OF LIFE. To understand why the Church is firm in her teaching that the **Eucharist truly is the Real Presence of Jesus Christ, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity**, it would help if you read the **6th Chapter of Saint John's Gospel: the Bread of Life Discourse**. It should sound awfully familiar, for back in 1966, Sister Suzanne Toolan, RSM, enshrined that chapter in the much-loved hymn we still regularly sing: **"I Am the Bread of Life."** As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that **Christ's** teaching about his own **Real Presence** in what would become the **Eucharist** not only **shocked** many; it drove some away! **Jesus** even asked his own **Apostles** if they also wanted to leave.

That is why the **Catholic Church** is so **insistent** that we understand **Eucharist** as **Christ's Real Presence!** For after **Jesus** proclaimed that the **Consecrated Bread** and **Wine** truly become His own **Flesh** and **Blood**, He then added a modern-age adage: **"It's MY way or the highway!"** And

just as He let the non-believers walk away and not partake in the **Eucharist**, so, too, does **Holy Mother Church**. She **does not** and **cannot** offer a blanket invite to all to join in the **Eucharistic Banquet**. Those who wish to receive **MUST** first accept that it truly **IS Christ's Real Presence**, not simply a **symbol** or **remembrance** of Him!

WE NEED EYES OF FAITH! To the human eye, the **Eucharistic Elements** still look and taste like bread and wine, even after they are consecrated, the highest form of a blessing. [Admittedly, for practical reasons and to minimize crumbs, we use thin wafers that are more akin to cardboard!] But with the eyes of faith, we can 'see' how, after the **Ordained Bishop** or **Priest** 'brings down' the **Holy Spirit** upon the offerings with his consecrated hands, and says the words our **Lord** said at the **Last Supper**, **Jesus** fulfills His promise **"to be with us always"** [Cf. **Matthew 28:20**] in a most ordinary yet most profound and amazing way! This is, perhaps, the greatest of all the mysteries of our **Faith**, one that even **Saints** struggled with - yet put their trust in what the Lord said is, indeed, true: **"This is my Body; this is my Blood!"**

BE TRULY PRESENT TO THE REAL PRESENCE. At the 1960's **Second Vatican Council**, Saint Paul VI wrote, **"This presence is called 'real' not to exclude the idea that the others are 'real' too, but rather to indicate presence par excellence, because it is substantial and through it Christ becomes present whole and entire, God and man."** Because of this, the **Church** prescribes rites and actions to reaffirm and bolster our faith in the **Real Presence**. Among them are, primarily, our worship of the **Blessed Sacrament** outside of **holy Mass: Eucharistic Exposition, Adoration, and Benediction; Eucharistic Processions; and Forty Hours Devotions**. We are directed to reverently **genuflect** before the **Blessed Sacrament** reserved in the **Tabernacle**, **refraining** from **all food and drink** [except water and medicine] for one hour before, and **bowing one's head** just before receiving **Holy Communion**. We must confess all **mortal** sins before receiving **Holy Communion**, or if no **Priest** is available, to make a good **Act of Contrition** and get to **Confession** ASAP. And we must never stop learning about the **Eucharist** or miss a weekly dose of this grace-filled Gift!

In Christ,

Father Mark