

The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

Objective: Like so many of our topics it can lead in many directions. The direction of why nearly seven in ten Catholics, 69%, say they personally believe that during the Catholic mass, the bread and wine used in communion “are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ”. We will look at the why and biblical support for the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist (RPCE). There are three essential words associated with the topic: transubstantiation, faith, and consubstantiation. As we ponder these three words and the scripture/catechism we will hopefully gain more insight into the teachings of the Church and some ammunition for our own discernment of RPCE, as well as, ways to explain the concepts and teachings to others.

Song Suggestion: Eat This Bread

Bible and Catechism Readings:

John 6:52-54

⁵¹I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats from this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I will give for the life of the world also is My flesh.” ⁵²Then the Jews *began* to argue with one another, saying, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” ⁵³So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. ⁵⁴The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.

⁵⁶The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, the one who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down out of heaven, not as the fathers ate and died; the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

1 Corinthians 11:27-29

²⁷Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸But a person must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹For the one who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not *properly* recognize the body.

Catechism

737 He (the Holy Spirit) makes present the mystery of Christ, supremely in the Eucharist, in order to reconcile them, bring them in to communion with God, that they may “bear fruit”.

1375 St. Ambrose is quoted “...Could not Christ’s word, which can make from nothing what they were not before? It is no less a feat to give things their original nature than to change their nature.”

1376 ...this holy council (Council of Trent) now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change, the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.

Saint: St Paul – Throughout his writings he affirms the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist

Vignette: – So why do so many Catholics “not believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist? Bill E, a Catholic who follows the precepts of the Church, was confronted by a friend who not only doesn’t know the precepts of the Church was not being exposed to sound catechesis. Bill was not prepared so he diverted away from the question. Later he did some research and found a podcast, audio and written form, on Catholic.com. about a 2019 Pew Research poll about Catholics’ belief in the real presence. He delves into the research paper.

See link below.

The first thing he learned was a significant number of those “Catholics” in the Pew Research poll did not know the Church teaches transubstantiation, bread and wine really become the body and blood of Jesus during the consecration. After listening and reading the text of the podcast Bill E was able to convey the Church’s teaching to his friend. He also found that those interviewed who did not go to mass regularly admitted they did not

know the Church's teaching on the Eucharist and this group was far more likely to believe the Eucharist is just a symbol. Bill E realized even though he did believe in the real presence he too was poorly catechized on the subject.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

Have you ever had to respond to a question for which understanding the real presence the essential issue? Such as non-Catholics receiving communion or why Do Catholics believe in the real presence?

Did you at one time question the real presence and why did you change?

If, so many Catholics don't believe or understand the real presence what would you suggest the Church can do to help those who don't believe? What can you do?

Action Plan:

1. Each time you are about to receive Holy Communion remind yourself you are about to receive the Real Body and Blood of Jesus and give thanks.
2. Make a plan to attend Eucharistic adoration during which contemplate the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.
3. Rather than watching You tube videos go to <http://www.catholic.com> or <http://www.catholicexchange.com> search on this topic or anther you would like to know about.

References:

Transubstantiation for Beginners - Francis Ripley 1993 Catholic Answers

<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/transubstantiation-for-beginners>

Holy Eucharist Adored at Faithful Catholic Colleges - [https://newmansociety.org/holy-eucharist-adored-at-faithful-catholic-](https://newmansociety.org/holy-eucharist-adored-at-faithful-catholic-colleges/?gclid=CjwKCAjwmK6IBhBqEiwAocMc8mY169t4ELVGK59mKXd5YagSSlybtiaYSIAT01vGjAxhu6-UfcnkXBoC6YYQAvD_BwE)

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Transubstantiation

The Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation states that the bread and wine, at the moment of consecration during Holy Mass, actually become the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Faith

Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of the scholastic theologians, said that the existence in the Eucharist of Christ's real body and blood "cannot be grasped by the experience of the senses, but only by the faith which has divine authority and its support." He put it into his famous verse: "Sight, touch, and taste in thee are each deceived; the ear alone most safely is believed; I believe all the Son of God has spoken, then through his own word there is no truer token."

Consubstantiation

Attempts to claim Christ is "really present," but then denies a truly bodily (physical) component to that presence. That makes no sense. If Christ is merely "spiritually" present, which is what consubstantiation suggests, then he is not wholly present.

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