

10 6-14-20 The Body and Blood of Christ

Let's take a quiz: Which one of the following statements is true?

1. The consecrated bread and wine at Mass symbolize the spirit and teachings of Jesus.
2. The consecrated bread and wine at Mass are the real presence of Jesus only during Mass.
3. The consecrated bread and wine at Mass are the real Body and Blood of Jesus if you believe it is so.
4. The consecrated bread and wine at Mass are the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and we can adore and worship the consecrated host and wine as our God.

Before you answer, here are a couple of hints: 1) The Catholic Church has always taken the words of Jesus literally when He said "Take and eat; this is my body... All of you must drink from (the cup) for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, to be poured out in behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins." Matt 26:26-28 And, when Jesus said: "I am the Bread of Life ... unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." Jn 6:48-53

2) Our Catholic Catechism states: **C 1374** In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist is "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained.*"

The correct answer to the above quiz is, of course, #4.

From the earliest days of the Church the Holy Eucharist was believed to be the real Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the moment of consecration during Mass the bread and wine miraculously transform into the Body and Blood of our Savior. And the elements will never be just bread and wine again. That's why extra care is taken to cleanse the paten and chalice after communion. That's why we place the remaining consecrated hosts securely in the tabernacle. That's why we can come before the Lord hidden within the tabernacle and really be in the presence of Jesus our Lord and God. That's why we can adore our Lord in the Eucharist during Eucharistic Adoration.

According to Jesus, receiving Him in the Eucharist is not an option. Our Lord tells us clearly: "**unless** you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." Jesus is telling us: without Holy Communion we will starve and die spiritually.

The feast of Corpus Christi (The Body and Blood of Christ) was established in 1264 by Pope Urban IV to emphasize the importance of what we are called to do every week, that is, to celebrate Holy Mass, professing our belief in the Holy Eucharist, and to receive our Lord in Holy Communion. The Pope asked St. Thomas Aquinas to write hymns for the feast. Aquinas wrote the *Tantum Ergo* and *O Salutaris*—hymns we still sing at Eucharistic Adoration.

Now, with our pandemic situation, Cardinal Collins has dispensed the faithful from the obligation to celebrate the Body and Blood of Christ every week. With no public Mass since March 17, however, I have been inspired by so many parishioners expressing their desire for the Eucharist. Also, a number of parishioners frequently come on to the church property, especially near our Eucharistic chapel to pray. This is a great witness.

Jesus promised his disciples that he would be present to them until the end of time. Our Lord is faithful to His promise by His real presence in the Holy Eucharist.