

# *Walking with Mary on the Path to Holiness*

**Thursday, June 18, 2020 ~ Mary and the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus**



As I looked at the list of topics for this year's novena, the one on the Eucharist seemed to jump out at me as if to say: Here I AM. (That is: I am in capital letters). Since my close and personal encounter with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament nearly five years ago, Jesus in the Eucharist continues to exercise His magnetic pull in my life.

The title of this presentation is: Mary and the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus: Loving and Adoring Jesus in the Eucharist.

Have you noticed that every time we read about one of Mary's apparitions, we see her asking for a chapel to be built? Why does she always ask for a chapel? The answer is simple. A

chapel is the building where the People of God can gather to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and encounter Jesus in the Eucharist. After the celebration, Jesus remains in the Blessed Sacrament housed in a tabernacle, present to all who wish to come and pay Him a visit.

How many times have I heard the word Eucharist, participated at the Eucharistic celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, received the Eucharist in Holy Communion, and maybe even spent some time before the Eucharist in silent prayer?

But with all that, do I really know the gift of the Eucharist?

There is one who knows the Eucharist intimately and that is Holy Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother. By her full cooperation with God, allowing Him to take flesh in her womb, she makes the Eucharist possible. I will begin this presentation with the doctrine of the Real Presence, (without which we really do not have the Eucharist). Then by reflecting on some of the important events in the lives of Jesus and Mary, we will let Our Mother show us how to love and adore Jesus today, now, in the Holy Eucharist.

According to the teaching of the Church, the definition of the Real Presence set forth by the Council of Trent is as follows: “In the first place, the Sacred Council openly and simply asserts that in the precious sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is contained truly, really, and substantially, under the appearance of those sensible things” (DS 1636).

This definition requires a bit of unpacking.

First, we see that this is a teaching that had to be defined in a council. The Council of Trent, in response to the Protestant Revolt (commonly known as the Protestant Reformation), dealt to a great degree with matters of Catholic Church teaching. It has been said that this Council was the most important for the Church. One of the areas of concern during this time was that of the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.

Second, we observe that the Council is very clear, to the point, in its teaching on the Eucharist. There is no room for ambiguity or confusion when defining that the Eucharist is really Jesus Himself.

Third, we learn that the consecration of the bread and wine, which requires the words and actions of the priest, make the Eucharist. Without the consecration there is no Eucharist. The consecration is only possible by a priest, acting in persona Christi (in the person of Christ). Thus without the priesthood there would be no Eucharist!

The fourth reality is that our Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true man, made possible through the Incarnation. Without the Incarnation, God becoming man, there would be no Eucharist.

Then there are the words “truly, really, substantially.” Each one shows us something of Christ’s presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

“Truly” refers to the fact that He is present not only in symbol but in reality. He is present outside of ourselves, so we can say that he is not merely subjectively present in our minds, but objectively present as well. The truth is that the entire Christ, the whole Christ, is contained in the Eucharist.

Christ is “really” present, not as a figure of speech or metaphor but really r-e-a-l. Christ is in the Eucharist. Period.

By the term “substantially”, Christ is present and more than merely by the exercise of His power. Of course, He is present everywhere exercising His power but His Real Presence in the Eucharist is unique. He is present in the fullness of His being, completely in His Divinity and His Humanity.

Let me use an example to shed some light on this mystery.

The famous British writer, C.S. Lewis, influences numerous people with his series *The Chronicles of Narnia*. We can say that the reader of his books experiences the presence of C.S. Lewis as he reads. The thoughts and ideas in the *Chronicles* make C.S. Lewis present in the mind and the heart of the reader. However, if C.S. Lewis were to make a personal visit to us here in Colwich, Kansas (assuming he were not already deceased), then we could say he is “substantially” present because he is present in the totality of his person body and soul.

Christ is present in the Eucharist not merely by the fact that He exercises His divine influence over our hearts and minds. He is wholly and entirely present, without division, in His Divinity and His Humanity. Wherever the Blessed Sacrament is to be found on this earth, there is Christ Himself. The Eucharist brings us into contact with the very same Jesus that was born in Bethlehem, grew up in the house of Mary and Joseph at Nazareth, He whom we contemplate in Sacred Scripture, the One who walked the earth over two thousand years ago!

Finally, we have the word “contained”. Father John Hardon in his book on the Real Presence entitled *With Us Today* says it this way: “If the verb contained seems strange, it should not be. Why not? Because the physical properties of what had been bread and wine are, as it were, the container which holds the whole Christ within the limits of their physical extension. You might say that Christ is circumscribed within the limits of the accidents or properties of what, before consecration, had been bread and wine” (28).

How is the bread and the wine changed into Christ? To explain this change (without which the Real Presence would not exist), the term “transubstantiation” is used. Once again from the words of Father Hardon: “Transubstantiation means that the substance of bread and

wine –what makes them bread and wine –is replaced by the whole Jesus Christ. The “breadness” and “wineness,” so to speak, are changed into the living Jesus, true God and true man, whole God and whole man. It does not merely mean that the substance of bread and wine becomes the substance of Christ. The Real Presence is not only the substance of Christ, but the whole of Christ –His substance plus all the human properties of His humanity. Father Hardon continues: “Finally, transubstantiation describes how the physical qualities of bread and wine –their color, texture, taste and whatever else is perceived by the senses –remain, but they (the bread and the wine) lose their substance. The qualities of bread and wine remain, but their substance is replaced by the whole Christ” (28-29).

So transubstantiation brings about the Real Presence of Christ and we can say as well, the real absence of the bread and wine. In the Eucharist then we have the whole Christ, all of His Body, all of His Blood, all of His Soul, all of His Divinity –truly God and truly man.

The Eucharist IS Christ Himself, fully alive, true God and true man!

If I believe this to be true, that Jesus Himself is present to me as He was in the time of Mary, Joseph, the Apostles, only now under a different form, then it should follow that I too would want to do all in my power to love and adore Him with all my heart, all my soul, all my mind, and all my strength as He is with me today in the Eucharist. Who will teach me? She who bore Him, raised Him, and lived with Him on this earth and now reigns with Him forever in Heaven!

From all eternity God specifically chose Mary to put forth the divine, eternal plan to bring fallen man back to Himself after Adam and Eve turned away from Him in the Garden of Eden. Having listened to the lie of the devil, they chose to say “no” to the love their Father God offered them. To remedy this separation, God created the woman Mary, to give birth to the One who would heal the wound of sin and reconcile sinful man with his loving Father. She is the woman who crushes the head of the serpent, satan, the devil.

No stain of sin, original or actual, has touched the body and soul of this woman. Thus, in her God could find the perfect place in which to abide. Having been conceived in the womb of her mother Ann without sin, she is pure without spot, stain, or wrinkle. Immaculate. No

obstacles bar her way to the Almighty God; she enjoys an attraction for God alone. Everything in her is drawn by this divine attraction. Her Immaculate Heart receives this pull of Divine Love without resistance. She is wholly receptive. All in her is “yes” to God. There is no “no” in Mary. Her “yes” makes possible for God to become incarnate in her womb. We read in the Gospel of Luke: “And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end” (Luke 1:31-33). The moment she gives her consent, her “yes”, her fiat, God the Second Person of the Trinity takes flesh in her. Nine months she carries the Child in her womb, the Flesh and Blood of Almighty God mingling with her own. He takes His Flesh and His Blood from her weaving Divinity into humanity. In intimate communion with her Son, she loves and adores the God that is taking shape within her.

Do I not experience a similar reality when I give my “fiat” every time I receive Him into my body and soul in Holy Communion? Is not my flesh and my blood mingled with His Flesh and His Blood so that I become inseparably one with Him? In this holy exchange I can love and adore the Eternal God who has now become as it were incarnate in me through my reception of Him in the Eucharist. I become His Body and His Blood given for the life of the world. As St. Elizabeth of the Trinity prays in her composition *The Prayer to the Holy Trinity*: “May I be for Him a new humanity in which He can renew all His mystery.”

Here I would like to say a few words about adoration. The Church teaches that adoration is the highest form of prayer. I come into the Divine Presence simply to waste time with God because He IS. He is the great I Am Who Am who encountered Moses in the burning bush. I ask nothing from Him. Like the Seraphim and Cherubim, I remain in His Presence to gaze on Him with love and affection giving myself to Him without reserve, holding nothing back. As St. Paul exhorts us to “pray without ceasing,” I believe because adoration is the highest form of prayer, we are to “adore without ceasing”.

Like the Virgin I can and should love and adore Him at all times, in every moment. I repeat: at all times, in every moment. The Nativity scene can teach and show us how to adore Our Lord in Eucharistic Adoration. As He lies in the manger, Mary and Joseph along with the

shepherds, gaze on Him in profound silence, their hearts filled with gratitude and awe. They bow before the mystery of God in a baby. I can do the same in Catholic chapels whether He is exposed in the monstrance or whether He reposes in the tabernacle. The Eucharist is the Lord, the great I AM!

Every event of His Infancy and Childhood, the Flight into Egypt, the Visit of the Magi, the Presentation and the Finding in the Temple, the “hidden life”, provides an opportunity for deep reflection with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. But nothing is complete without the Paschal Mystery- His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven. On the Cross, He gives me the sacrifice of Himself, wholly and entirely so that He can feed me with His Flesh and His Blood and remain with me always even unto the end of time. This is the why of the Eucharist. Here I quote the words of Pope Benedict XVI (now Pope Emeritus) in *Sacramentum Caritatis*, a post synodal apostolic exhortation on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church’s Life and Mission:

*“It took place within a ritual meal commemorating the foundational event of the people of Israel: their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. This ritual meal, which called for the sacrifice of lambs (cf. Ex 12:1-28, 43-51), was a remembrance of the past, but at the same time a prophetic remembrance, the proclamation of a deliverance yet to come. The people had come to realize that their earlier liberation was not definitive, for their history continued to be marked by slavery and sin. The remembrance of their ancient liberation thus expanded to the invocation and expectation of a yet more profound, radical, universal and definitive salvation. This is the context in which Jesus introduces the newness of His gift. In the prayer of praise, the Berakah, He does not simply thank the Father for the great events of past history, but also His own “exaltation.” In instituting the sacrament of the Eucharist, Jesus anticipates and makes present the sacrifice of the Cross and the victory of the resurrection. At the same time, He reveals that he Himself is the true sacrificial lamb, destined in the Father’s plan from the foundation of the world, as we read in The First Letter of Peter (cf 1:18-20). By placing His gift in this context, Jesus shows the salvific meaning of His death and*

*resurrection, a mystery which renews history and the whole cosmos. The institution of the Eucharist demonstrates how Jesus' death, for all its violence and absurdity, became in Him a supreme act of love and mankind's definitive deliverance from evil" (SC 10).*

Jesus makes Himself accessible to me at the Cross. Having breathed His last and giving over His Spirit into the hands of His Father, He receives the thrust of the lance into His Sacred Flesh, His Heart pierced causing Blood and Water to burst out. This Blood and this Water are the sacraments: Baptism that cleanses and the Eucharist that nourishes. The Apostle John in chapter 19 of his Gospel writes: "...but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water." With John, Mary witnessed the side of her Son torn open. She saw the blood and the water issue forth from His pierced side. Yet she stood at His side under the Cross, offering all of herself anew with Him. Though her heart was laden with sorrow, seeing the horror of man's sin heaped upon her Son, Lord and God, she knew this was His hour, the purpose for which He had come into the world. It was for this hour that God became man. Jesus was born to die, to give us life, the very life that is the giving and receiving of the Love lived in the eternal Triune Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

He invites me, in every celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, to offer my life with His to the Heavenly Father and so as we hear in the Eucharist Prayer, to make of myself (all I am, all I possess, all I do) an offering pleasing and acceptable to God. He in me and I in Him, for my salvation and the salvation of the whole world.

So...how do I take this profound Reality of the Eucharist into my own life? With my Mother. I ask her to give me Her Heart so that like her I may be pure of heart, seeing God and being present to Him, loving and adoring Him at all times, in every moment of my life.

To conclude, I offer what I hope are five practical considerations so that Christ in the Eucharist becomes really r-e-a-l in your life.

During the Mass, at the Presentation of the Gifts: be intentional with offering the sacrifice of yourself with Jesus as the bread is placed on the paten and the wine is poured into

the chalice. Think of the bread as your flesh and the wine as your blood which will be mingled with His Flesh and His Blood broken and poured out for the life of the world.

At the reception of Holy Communion: be intentional as you prepare yourself in the Communion line. Use the words of the Angelus: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to Thy Word." Then having received Communion personalize the words "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" to "And the Word is made flesh and dwells among us." See yourself as one in whom Christ lives again!

In Eucharistic Adoration: in silence, reflect on the words of the Psalmist: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Make acts of adoration using the Fatima prayer: "O Most Holy Trinity, I adore Thee. My God! My God! I love Thee in the Most Blessed Sacrament."

When genuflecting or bowing before the tabernacle: pray the words of Doubting Thomas: "My Lord and My God."

Passing a Catholic Church: make a reverent sign of the Cross.

By these simple practices and keeping the Mother of God close, you and I can grow in our own love of Our Lord and Savior so that the entirety of our life becomes an unceasing song of praise and adoration to the Triune God.

May the Heart of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament be praised, adored and loved with grateful affection at every moment, in all the tabernacles of the world, now and until the end of time. Amen.

### **Works Consulted**

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