

## 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday: **Holy Eucharist and The Real Presence of Jesus**

Starting last Sunday, the *four Sundays* forthcoming, we will listen and learn about Jesus talking about the Eucharist-The Body and Blood of Christ. Why the church offers so many weekends to reflect on this Mystery? (John Chapter 6)

It is “The **Source and Summit** of All Christian worship” (Vat. II)

-It’s the beginning and the end ‘the origin and the goal’. Let’s see this in the background of the pew survey results: 70% of Cath. -not believing in the real presence of Jesus in the Euch. Here, we have a big problem. As many would affirm, “maybe we failed to teach people enough about this most beautiful, imp. Sacrament of the church”/ or ‘didn’t pay attention to learn’?

ASPM Synod 2nd Year: Teaching on the Holy Mass/Eucharist We will dedicate the coming weeks to learn a bit more about this

I Invite you to listen to Bishop Robert Barren’s rather lengthy class/teaching at National Euch. Congress July 20<sup>th</sup> at Indianapolis (with 50K presence @1.15 hours)

Church’s belief in the real presence: why we believe and say the Eucharist is not simply *a sign or symbol*: but Christ is REALLY, TRULY and SUBSTANTIALLY present under the Eucharistic form of bread and wine? What substantiates the Church’s faith and reasoning on this?

- 1) The Bible
- 2) Fathers of the Church- from very First Century
- 3) Medieval times Teachings of greatest theologians
- 4) Church Councils till Vat II- until today

Let’s look at the first point today: John 6: 27: “Do not work for food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life”. He continues to affirm: “I am the bread of life”.

The Jewish background tells us of strict prohibition to eat animal’s flesh with blood. Jesus is telling them, not just to eat any animal’s flesh, but his own flesh and blood.

This was a scandalous teaching to his audience; The crowd walked away: “How can he give his flesh to eat”? They questioned him and walked away. But, Jesus insisted, “Amen, amen I say to you”: means, he intensifies his affirmation, without compromise: Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life within you”, means “My flesh is ‘real food’.

This is the Biblical background for the ancient catholic belief that Christ is really, truly and substantially present under the forms of Bread and wine.

Let’s see the power of words spoken, especially by the authorized person in the proper way. Eg: Some words spoken can create effects or lifelong changes. Words can change attitudes and hearts. Like, an elderly person still feeling the words spoken while a child. If I say: ‘you are under arrest’, it doesn’t have any effect. But if a designated police officer says it, whether you like it or not, you are in fact, ‘under arrest’, because his word makes effect. His authority changes reality. (or an umpire says to a soccer player, ‘you are out’, means you are out). God creates things by His word. Jesus is “the Word made flesh” (Eg: Lazarus, come out; “little girl, get up”), because the word of Jesus transforms reality. His words have the power to **change reality**.

At Last Supper, Jesus said: “this is my Body”. The SUBSTANCE of the bread and wine change into the SUBSTANCE of the Body and blood of Jesus. That is the church’s faith and claim, and we call this, transubstantiation. What happens when the priest says these words at the consecration? He is not speaking his own words; but he speaks *IN PERSONA CHRISTI* – the very person of Christ. He speaks with the full authority of Christ, by virtue of his priestly ordination, as he moves from third person to first person. That is why his words- pronounced as Jesus’s own words- have the power to change, to transform.

In front of such a great mystery-this Most Holy Sacrament-, we can only kneel down and adore, saying, “ O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament divine, all praise and all thanksgiving, be every moment thine”. Amen