

THE REAL PRESENCE

Just What Is It?

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I

Do you believe in GOD?

If you do, the BLESSED EUCHARIST should mean something to you; if you do not, don't waste your time reading this pamphlet . . .

GOD DOES EXIST.

He is all powerful;

He is all knowing;

He is TRUTH.

Christ is God—the second person of the Blessed Trinity.

WHAT CHRIST TAUGHT MUST BE TRUE.

HE WOULD NOT BE GOD IF HIS WORD WAS FALSE.

If Christ is God—and He is—we must believe ALL He taught. Not ours to pick and choose. ALL Christ taught is TRUE.

Logical reasoning, isn't it?

Whatever the Blessed Eucharist is, did Christ Himself teach It, introduce It, and give It to the Catholic Church for all time?

Nothing is more certain.

Statement of Catholic Doctrine

What is the Blessed Eucharist? What does the Catholic Church believe and teach about It?

The Blessed Eucharist is the sacrament which really contains the BODY and BLOOD and SOUL and DIVINITY of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.

It is the Sacrament of the REAL PRESENCE.

Catholics firmly believe that Christ, God Himself, is really and truly and substantially present in what they call the Blessed Eucharist.

What an astonishing belief!

Fancy Christ living yet in something so earthly and tangible as bread!

How can this be true? Are Catholics credulous? Certainly not. They are good enough to believe ALL that Christ taught.

They believe even this: Christ is real and living on this very day in this very year in the Blessed Sacrament on Catholic altars all over the world.

What a strange belief!

We must look into this.

A Matter of Faith

At the outset we must state that Christ's Real Presence can in no way be discovered by the senses or by the unaided intellect of man. It is a question of FAITH. Catholics believe Christ is God, and on His authority, they believe the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Eucharist IS A FACT.

What kind of argument is that?— you might persist.

Perfectly logical argument. You believe in God, don't you? You believe the word of Christ is TRUE and it could not be FALSE. So you must believe on His authority the mystery of His Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist.

THAT IS, if Christ ever taught anything about His Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

DID He actually do so?

Now we are coming to the crux of the question.

Background

Ever heard of the Lake of Galilee? You have. Good. A couple of miles to the north-east of this lake is the town of Bethsaida. On one occasion, Christ sought rest and solitude near this place; but His retirement was short-lived, as the people, men and women and children, sought Him in their thousands. They wished to be near Him; for He taught them; consoled them; and worked such astonishing miracles of mercy for the afflicted amongst them. The blind saw again; the dumb spoke; the deaf heard and the dead lived again. And all this, as they in their wonderment observed, simply at His Word.

Simple, curious, spell-bound people. They followed the Man of Galilee and forgot everything in their eagerness. FORGOT EVEN TO BRING FOOD WITH THEM.

You know what happened. Christ did not order the people to go and buy or solicit food in the neighbouring towns and villages.

No, He fed the five thousand of them.

Fed them, too, after a stupendous miracle, in which, by His Divine power, He multiplied a few loaves of bread and two fishes.

One of Christ's greatest miracles. Such was the first multiplication of bread.

But why this narrative? Has it any relation to the Blessed Eucharist— whatever that is?

Quite, a lot, as we shall see.

The multiplication of the bread happened at the beginning of the third year of Christ's public ministry. The day following this miracle, the crowd went from Bethsaida down to Capharnaum, where they found Christ in the temple.

There Christ spoke to them about THE BREAD OF LIFE.

It is not very difficult to see why the people went to Capharnaum to find Christ.

They saw a splendid opportunity of enjoying an easy life. And we cannot blame them. No need to work for food when Christ could supply it so easily. It was no effort at all for Him. Just work a miracle.

Yes, the Jews saw pleasant possibilities. Why not keep near Christ. So easy. Good food in abundance. No laborious effort on their part or His. Truly an intriguing situation.

Christ, however, had not the slightest intention of making things as easy as all that for them. It was not His policy. He had no wish to alter the divine decree that man should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. Adam fell; and he and his posterity would have to pay for it.

In fact, Christ told them clearly and without mixing words, that they were to "labour not for the meat which perishes, but that which endures unto life everlasting."

Not earthly bread, but enduring bread.

Obviously another kind of bread altogether.

The BREAD OF LIFE.

Let us keep before us that Christ IS God. Whatever He PROMISES to do, He must do. He would be a deceiver if He did not fulfil a promise.

What is this talk about a promise? Did Christ, God, promise ANYTHING? Anything that has any bearing on the present question?

Assuredly, He did.

Let us read a little HISTORY as narrated by the Evangelist St. John. It is the sixth chapter of his inspired Book.

Verse 26: Jesus answered them, and said: Amen, amen I say to you, you seek me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

V. 27: Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the son of man will give you. For him hath God, the Father, sealed.

Christ replies to the Jews who sought Him out, that they sought Him desiring TEMPORAL GOODS; not, as they should have done, desiring SPIRITUAL GOODS.

V.28: They said therefore unto Him: What shall we do that we may work the works of God?

V.29: Jesus answered, and said to them: This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he hath sent.

V.30: They said therefore to him: What sign therefore dost thou shew, that we may see, and may believe thee?

What dost thou work?

V.31: Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

V.32: Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say to you; Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

V.33: For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world.

Observe that the dispositions of the Jews are decidedly bad. They understand perfectly that Christ requires Faith in Him, as He was sent by God the Father. Nevertheless, they demand a SIGN that they might see and believe.

"What dost thou work?" they asked contemptuously.

The recent multiplication of bread, a stupendous miracle, was not, it would seem, SIGN enough for them. Surely, that should have convinced them that Christ is God. What more obvious sign could they have needed?

Yet with obstinate defiance they go on to argue about the manna their fathers ate in the desert. "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Wasn't that manna bread from heaven?

Poor stubborn Jews! Christ agrees that manna was bread from heaven; but He assures them openly and clearly that the new bread He promises is more excellent by far than the bread Moses gave their fathers in the desert. Manna FELL from the skies: it did not come from THE THRONE OF GOD. "For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and (note well) giveth life to the world."

V.34: They said therefore unto him: Lord, give us always this bread.

V.35: And Jesus said to them: I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger: and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.

V.36: But I say unto you, that you also have seen me, and you believe not.

V.37: All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will not cast out.

V.38: Because I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

"I am the bread of life."

I, Christ, God, AM the bread of life

The very idea of it! The Jews knew Christ—knew His lowly mother and His humble, hard-working foster-father, Joseph the carpenter. Fancy this Christ saying, so seriously, too, that He is the bread of life. Too much for any Jew. Too much for one who did not possess the gift of Faith.

They did not know that Christ is God. Even His miracles, about which they were so enthusiastic, did not convince them of His divinity.

We have an advantage; for we DO know that Christ is God. And we are considering a promise that He was making.

V.47: Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in me, hath everlasting life.

V.48: I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE.

V.49: Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead.

V.50: This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it, he may not die.

V.51: I am the LIVING bread which came down from heaven.

Thus Christ, severely reproaching His hearers for their incredulity, persists with His argument that He IS the new heavenly bread—a bread that had to be EATEN.

HE MUST BE EATEN by those who would have everlasting life.

"I WILL GIVE . . ."

The study of St. John's inspired History now becomes even more intriguing.

V.52: . . . and the bread that I WILL give, is my flesh, for the life of the world.

Christ for the first time clearly asserts that HIS FLESH is that food about which He has been speaking.

This assertion is made by Christ Who could not deceive or be deceived.

There must have followed uproar on the part of the Jews. Could they believe their ears? Here was this son of the village carpenter saying: 'And the bread which I will give is MY FLESH for the life of the world.'

Uproar certainly DID follow.

"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" V. 53. Christ heard their murmuring. The Searcher of hearts knew

their thoughts.

But did He say something like this: "Oh, just a moment; I beg your pardon, but I did not mean it that way. Sorry I have misled you?"

He was God; it was His DUTY to correct any wrong impression for which He may have been responsible. He would not be God if He deliberately allowed his hearers to be misled by what He taught.

BUT CHRIST DID NOT WITHDRAW OR ALTER ANY OF HIS UTTERANCES.

HE INSISTED ON THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH OF ALL HE HAD SAID.

They Understood Literally

Christ knew His disciples understood His words in their literal sense.

He meant His words to be understood that way.

Why?

Because His reply solemnly affirmed:

(1) The necessity of EATING His flesh, if one was to have eternal life.

(2) The TRUTH or REALITY of this EATING of His flesh.

Read V.54:

"Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you."

Except you EAT . . .

V.55: He that EATETH my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day.

V.56: FOR my flesh IS meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed.

V.57: He that EATETH my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him.

"Doth this Scandalise You?"

Seeing Christ persist in the truth of His promise, "Many of his disciples hearing it said: This saying is hard, and who can hear it?"—V.61.

Then Christ, "knowing in himself, that his disciples murmured at this, said to them: Doth this scandalise you?"

They were scandalised precisely because Christ insisted on the literal meaning of His words. And because He did, "many of them walked no more with him."

We can't believe that. His flesh to eat! Ridiculous!

Come on—we've had enough of him! And Christ allowed them to go. His words were true, no matter the consequence.

V.68: Then Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away?

V.69: And Simon Peter answered him: Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

V.70: And we have believed and have known, that thou art the Christ, the Son of God.

So Far, Any Conclusions?

Christ, the Son of God, introduced SOMETHING NEW to His hearers, SOMETHING surprising. Christ, the Son of God, went to great pains to show He was not joking, He was not being playful, but that He taught this new SOMETHING as absolutely TRUE.

Christ, the Son of God, did not use misleading terminology. He spoke openly and honestly. Christ, the Son of God, taught the Doctrine of HIS REAL PRESENCE. It was the new SOMETHING.

Christ, the Son of God,

(a) spoke of His Flesh and Blood as FOOD and DRINK;

(b) promised in the plainest language that He would give His Flesh and Blood to be EATEN and DRUNK by His people.

Christ, the Son of God, insisted that the people take Him literally.

Christ, the Son of God, offered no APOLOGY, WITHDRAWAL, or CORRECTION when He saw the people DID take Him literally.

Christ, the Son of God, would not be God, if HE was the author of the world's GREATEST DECEPTION.

But He is God—the author of mankind's GREATEST BLESSING.

If God is TRUTH, the REAL PRESENCE is TRUE.

God is TRUTH.

The REAL PRESENCE IS A FACT.

Christ definitely PROMISED the REAL PRESENCE.

Did He actually give it ?

Let us examine the available evidence.

Once again some History. This time, the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke and St. Paul . . .

They are relating the history of Christ's farewell meal with His Apostles on the night previous to His death . . .

At that meal, Christ did SOMETHING that was to have a tremendous effect on the spiritual life of the world for all time . . .

WHAT DID HE DO?

HE INSTITUTED THE BLESSED EUCHARIST, THE SACRAMENT OF HIS REAL PRESENCE.

First, let us hear these inspired historians.

Matthew: But when it was evening, he sat down with his twelve disciples . . . And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread and blessed, and broke: and gave to his disciples and said: Take ye and eat: This is my body.

And taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying:

Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood .

Mark: And whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread; and blessing, broke, and gave to them, and said: Take ye. This is my body.

And having taken the chalice, . . . and he said to them: This is my blood . . .

Luke: And taking bread, he gave thanks, and broke; and gave to them, saying: This is my body, which is given for you.

. . . In like manner the chalice also, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you.

St. Paul: Take ye and eat; this is my body.

. . . This chalice is the new testament in my blood, . . . For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come . . . whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, SHALL BE GUILTY OF THE BODY AND OF THE BLOOD OF THE LORD.

The Real Presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine is unassailably proved from the words used in the institution of the Blessed Sacrament.

"THIS IS MY BODY." Who used those words? Christ, the Son of God.

Was He jesting, when He used them ?

It was one of the most solemn moments of His life.

Did He wish to deceive or mislead His Apostles?

That is impossible.

Did He mean what He said?

Being God, He could not mean anything else.

Was He speaking metaphorically?

Definitely not. There was no reason why He should. Besides, He PROMISED to give His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. Now He is fulfilling that promise.

What do those words mean?

An honest, plain statement, such as that, and uttered by Truth Itself, could not possibly mean anything but: "THIS IS MY BODY."

Further:

Christ, God held something in His hand, and offered it to His Apostles to eat. It HAD BEEN bread, but when He offered It, It was NOT bread. CHRIST HAD OBVIOUSLY DONE SOMETHING to that bread.

He had changed bread into His Body and Blood.

He MUST have done so. Being God, He COULD do so.

The appearances of bread and wine undoubtedly remained. The Apostles thought they saw bread and wine. But they KNEW Christ's living BODY and BLOOD were present in what seemed to be bread and wine.

Christ, by His divine power, had changed the SUBSTANCE of bread and wine into His Body and Blood. And He gave the Apostles, His first priests, the power to do the same.

"Do THIS (what I have just done) in commemoration of Me."

What Christ gave them was His Body and Blood.

The Apostles believed it.

The Universal Catholic Church has believed it for almost two thousand years.

Why should not ALL CHRISTIANS believe it?

FOR WHO IS ANY CREATURE TO CHALLENGE THE TRUTH OF THE WORD OF GOD? ..

As a result of that unfortunate series of events that became known as the Reformation, a large portion of the Christian world has been ROBBED of its most priceless possession. It has been robbed of the Real Presence of the Son of God.

Non-Catholic reader, whatever you might be, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Salvationist, or a member of any of the other couple of hundred sects, YOU HAVE BEEN ROBBED. Through foolish men who founded your particular brand of non-Catholicism, you have been led away from Christ into a WILDERNESS of Unbelief and Uncertainty.

Your ancestors, before the 16th century, HAD the Real Presence, and loved and respected It. Now you have NOTHING. But you would have had IT to-day, had it not been for the pride of Luther, the lust of Henry VIII, and the rope and sword of his successors.

If you believe Christ is God, as I think you do, you SHOULD HAVE THE REAL PRESENCE.

Through no fault of yours, It was taken from you.

An honest facing of the facts, should show you that the Blessed Eucharist has been a reality all over the world for almost two thousand years.

Hundreds of millions believe It NOW.

Millions and millions have believed It back to Christ's day.

If they are all wrong, and have been all wrong, GOD HIMSELF IS TO BLAME.

Catholics are GOOD enough to believe the honest, straightforward words of Christ. Catholics the world over, men of every race and colour, of different temperaments and character, believe the words of Christ.

Catholics throughout twenty long centuries have been GOOD enough to believe the words of Christ, Eternal Truth.

For them all, "THIS IS MY BODY" means "THIS IS MY BODY."

But for some reason, for all other Christians, "This is my Body" MUST mean something else. Those words are made to mean anything else but "This is my Body."

Strange, isn't it?

Many men have written books on those few words, trying to prove that they can't possibly mean what they say. Four simple words that have as many meanings as the host of writers who try to DISTORT their one and only meaning.

Very strange, indeed.

Caesar spoke; he is believed.

Herod spoke; he is believed. Charlemagne spoke; he is believed. Henry VIII spoke; he is believed.

You, honest man, speak; you are believed.

CHRIST, GOD, SPOKE; He is not believed.

Doesn't make sense, does it?

Christ gave His first priests the power to do what He had done, i.e., to change the substance of bread into His body and blood. They, in turn, were to give that power to others selected—and so to the end of time.

The Blessed Eucharist, as Christ ordained, was to be in His One, Holy, and Universal Church to the end of the world .. .

At the Catholic Mass, the substance of bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

That is what happens at Mass.

That is why Catholics attend Mass. Catholics here, in Europe, in America, in Asia, in Iceland—everywhere.

The Catholic Mass is the very same the world over.

Catholics do not attend Mass to sing a few hymns.

Catholics do not attend Mass because they think it proper to go.

Catholics do not attend Mass to hear a man preach.

They attend, because at Mass, Christ, living and real and substantial, COMES in person to live with them, and to give His Body and Blood as true bodily food .. .

The Mass is the REAL way God wishes to be honoured.

Man-made "service," no matter how sincere, is the way men think God should be honoured.

God meant the Mass for all Christians.

Sinful men took it away from millions.

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