

LITURGY BYTES



Picking up on last week's theme about being "bored" at Mass, we should never overlook the most important facet, and that is having a deeper appreciation of **what** or, more importantly, **who** we receive at Communion. As we all know, in the Eucharist, Christ is present and by receiving, we receive Christ.

The celebration of bread and wine becomes the very means of an intimate union with Christ. In St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians, we hear that the bread is an actual "sharing in the body of Christ," and the cup of wine is an actual "sharing in the blood of Christ." (1 Cor. 10:16)

To the early Christians, the Lord's Supper was not just a memorial but the very **presence** of their Lord. St. Justin Martyr tells us that the Eucharist is not "common bread and common drink" but is the "flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh." These Christians were emphatic in their belief that Christ is present in the Eucharist. The second century Bishop Ignatius of Antioch goes so far as to say that the heretics are those who "do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ." While this may be a shocking statement to many Christians in our country today, historically most Christians held a high view of the Eucharist. Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and other ancient Christian traditions believe that the Eucharist is truly Jesus Christ.

So how could Church ever be boring? By attending Mass and receiving Our Lord in Holy Communion, Jesus is giving Himself to us – the greatest gift. More to come next week!

Have a blessed, safe, and healthy week! ~~~*Michele Hahn*