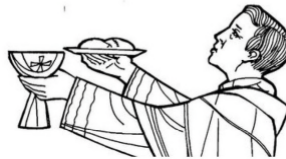


LITURGY BYTES

by Michele Hall



Do This in Memory of Me



Have you ever wondered what Jesus gave in offering to us His Body and Blood? Simply put on the cross, Christ saw love through to the end. Keep in mind that the institution narrative of the Eucharist does not just recall the Last Supper. We are invited to eat and drink the Eucharist, to die to ourselves and to rise into the life of God. This is the order of love that Jesus instituted.

Jesus becomes present to us in his Body and his Blood because the words he spoke at the Last Supper promised that he would. These words promised that he would give the entirety of himself to us. He is totally present because Jesus Christ, if he is going to give himself to us, is going to give everything.

The transformation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is known as "transubstantiation." The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a true and real manner – soul and divinity. Transubstantiation declares that Jesus is really and truly sacramentally present in the Eucharist. There is not half bread and part God, nor partial wine and part of Jesus. Bread and wine cease functioning anymore as bread and wine. Their physical character remains, but what they are is really Christ's Body and Blood, soul and divinity. It is Jesus dwelling among us.

At every Mass, we are called to see Christ present among us in his Body and Blood. We cannot see it as if we are conducting a scientific experiment. We see with the eyes of faith. In the Eucharist we practice the art of seeing – seeing beyond what is simply before us and behold the presence of the risen Lord dwelling among us. In fact, this practice of seeing with faith is necessary for the entire Christian life. Transubstantiation is not about magic. It is about a way of seeing. Pray about that as we receive the Eucharist next time.

Have a blessed, safe, and present week ahead!