



I.
Real Presence





“This
is



my
body.”

—MARK 14:22

Christ Is Here

My Lord and my God!

—JOHN 20:28

Poem

St. Francis of Assisi

“Let the Whole of Mankind Tremble”

Let the whole of mankind tremble

the whole world shake

and the heavens exult

when Christ, *the Son of the living God*,

is present on the altar

in the hands of a priest.

O admirable heights and sublime lowliness!

O sublime humility!

O humble sublimity!

That the Lord of the universe,

God and the Son of God,

so humbles Himself
that for our salvation
He hides Himself under the little form of bread!
Look, brothers, at the humility of God
and *pour out your hearts before Him!*
Humble yourselves, as well,
that you may be exalted by Him.
Therefore,
hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves
so that
He Who gives Himself totally to you
may receive you totally.

Scripture

Mark 14:22–25

While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

Reflection

Bishop Barron

Catholicism

At the very beginning of her career, Flannery O'Connor, who would develop into one of the greatest Catholic writers of fiction in the twentieth century, sat down to dinner with Mary McCarthy and a group of other New York intellectuals. The young Flannery, clearly the junior member of this sophisticated circle, was overwhelmed and barely said a word all evening. McCarthy, a former Catholic, trying to draw O'Connor out, made a few nice remarks about the Eucharist, commenting that it was a very powerful symbol. Flannery looked up and in a shaky voice said, "Well, if it's a symbol, to hell with it." I can't imagine a better summary of the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence.

Catechism

1373–1374

"Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us," is present in many ways to his Church:¹ in his word, in his Church's prayer, "where two or three are gathered in my name" (Matt. 18:20), in the poor, the sick, and the imprisoned (see

1. Rom. 8:34; see *LG* 48.

Matt. 25:31–46), in the sacraments of which he is the author, in the sacrifice of the Mass, and in the person of the minister. But “he is present . . . most *especially in the Eucharistic species*.”² The mode of Christ’s presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as “the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend.”³ In the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist “the Body and Blood, together with the Soul and Divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained*.”⁴ “This presence is called ‘real’—by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be ‘real’ too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a *substantial* presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present.”⁵

Reflection

Flannery O’Connor

The Habit of Being

I believe what the Church teaches—that God has given us reason to use and that it can lead us toward a knowledge of him, through analogy; that he has revealed himself in history and

2. *SC* 7.

3. St. Thomas Aquinas, *STb* III, 73, 3 c.

4. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1651.

5. Paul VI, *MF* 39.

continues to do so through the Church, and that he is present (not just symbolically) in the Eucharist on our altars. To believe all this I don't take any leap into the absurd. I find it reasonable to believe, even though these beliefs are beyond reason.

Prayer

St. John Henry Newman

Meditations and Devotions

I place myself in the presence of him, in whose Incarnate Presence I am before I place myself there.

I adore you, O my Savior, present here as God and man, in Soul and Body, in true Flesh and Blood.

I acknowledge and confess that I kneel before that Sacred Humanity, which was conceived in Mary's womb, and lay in Mary's bosom; which grew up to man's estate, and by the Sea of Galilee called the Twelve, wrought miracles, and spoke words of wisdom and peace; which in due season hung on the cross, lay in the tomb, rose from the dead, and now reigns in heaven.

I praise, and bless, and give myself wholly to him, who is the true Bread of my soul, and my everlasting joy.

Amen.