



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I've mentioned in my homilies, we are reading through the Bread of Life Discourse in John 6. Over these weeks, we will hear how Jesus shows us the grace of the Eucharist. The Church has constantly taught that the Eucharist is the Real Presence of Christ: Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. She has traditionally used the language of "transubstantiation," meaning that at the consecration, the substance (the very essence) of bread and wine cease to exist, and now only the substance of Jesus remains, while maintaining the accidents (appearance) of bread and wine.

Now that we have established *who* the Church (and Jesus) say the Eucharist is – Jesus – I want to look a little more at *what* the Eucharist is. The Eucharist is the Presence of Christ in the fullness of the **Pascal Mystery**. Now what in the world does that mean? It means that even though we see only one "moment," as it were, of the Eucharist, it is the Presence of the Risen Christ, taking in the wholeness of His humanity – His incarnation (becoming human), His suffering and death, His resurrection, and His ascension into Heaven. We can especially focus on the suffering and death for it is here that we see the love of God manifest most clearly.

When we go to Mass, when the Eucharist is consecrated, we are at the foot of the Cross, we are at Golgotha. The old song asks, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" The answer is a resounding, "YES!" Every time we go to Mass, we are there. In some mysterious way, the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross was raised from time to eternity (as we can read about in the book of Revelation), and at each Mass, that sacrifice is brought to this time and this place – or to look at it another way, we are raised beyond time into the infinite eternity of Heaven, and so are at the foot of the Cross. If we could only remove the veil, we would see all of the angels and saints, and Christ pouring out His incredible love for us – right here on the altar. I encourage you to watch the free video on YouTube: "The Veil Removed". This short video gives a glimpse of what we believe happens at Mass.

Everything we need, all the grace to forgive our sins, to heal our wounds, to break us free from our addictions was given to us by the cross and resurrection of Jesus – through the power of God's infinite love for us! All of these graces are present at each and every Mass! We have but to dispose ourselves to receive them and they will be ours!

One of the other names for the Eucharist is Holy Communion. We so often bandy this name about – as children prepare to make their First Holy Communion – that we forget what the word even means. Think about it: *Communion*. We can have *union* with almighty God!!! This should blow our minds, that God wants this with you, with me! God created us for so much more than this "mortal coil," but to be with Him in intimate union for eternity. When we come to Holy Communion, we receive a foretaste of this. We'll hear from St. Paul in a couple of weeks about how marriage is a sign of our union with Christ – it is, he says, a great mystery! In light of this, we see that the Cross is the marriage-bed of Christ – not a bed of ecstasy but of pain (see St. Augustine). And the non-sexual marriage act between Christ and the Church is Holy Communion – an intimate union with Christ, where we, as bride, take Christ's Body into our own Body in order that we can become one flesh with Christ our bridegroom (see Genesis 2:24).

Let us beg our Lord to "Open the Eyes of Our Hearts" that we may truly see who we receive in Holy Communion, and what that means for us here and now!