

EMMAUS AND EUCHARIST



"And it happened that while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them ... and they set out at once and recounted what had taken place on the way." (Luke 24:13-25)

At Emmaus, Jesus did—for the first time—what he told his apostles to continue to do in his name. By his presence and his actions, Jesus re-presented to the two disciples his Last Supper, his sacrifice on Calvary, and his coming again in glory. Today, we would say that Cleopas and his brother in Christ had participated in the Mass ... they understood what was taking place on the altar ... they received Holy Communion, and when the Mass had ended, they went out to proclaim and serve the Lord and one another.

The Last Supper and the Sacrifice of the Cross, are not just historical events that happened 2000 years ago. These are the events of our liturgy of the Eucharist in which we participate. In this liturgy you and I are not passive spectators at a theatrical performance or a boring ritual. We are being brought into actual contact with divinity. The Eternal Word breaking into our lives, Divine Reality being clothed in our physical reality. Can we appreciate these moments of awe when we are privileged to join all creation, the angels and the saints in glorifying God in the highest and saying with them, holy, holy, holy?

It is before this altar at every Mass, that with our presence, we say "yes" to this divine reality: by listening to God's word ... joining our minds with the words spoken by the priest at the consecration ... by our reverential gestures of genuflecting, kneeling, bowing, and by our humble opening of our hands—or our mouths—to receive our Lord and Savior.



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The bottom line in reflecting on the meaning of the Eucharist is the fact that it is mystery. We cannot explain in physical terms this Divine Presence because it transcends our limited human understanding. But while we cannot fully understand the mystery, we can fully believe it because our faith is rooted in the unambiguous words and deeds of Christ himself. Take this bread and eat it; this is My Body- take this wine and share it among yourselves- this is My Blood- do this in memory of Me. A lot of people had a lot of trouble with this. But in the final analysis to believe in the Real Presence is simply to take Jesus at his word.

In the moment we engage Jesus at Communion, or when we sit in his Presence in the tabernacle, or participate in benediction, we transcend time and space and become a part of the cosmic chorus of angels and saints who live, love and adore the God. During these special times, we travel farther than anything in the galaxy because we are traveling in a spiritual dimension. A place where space and time have no relevance. The Holy Eucharist is no more and no less than the Divine "Mystery of total self-giving, enabling us to live the eternal now of the resurrected Christ while we are still here on earth.

Receiving Holy Communion is more than receiving God's love and life. That is too one-sided love. There must be our giving ... of ourselves ... of our thoughts ... words and actions. And this sanctuary which we approach is the place where we will make that covenant exchange.

"Let us renew our belief in the Real Presence by asking the Holy Spirit from this moment on to give us the grace to understand every word and gesture of Christ. Because we want to live a supernatural life... Because our Lord has shown his desire to give Himself to us as nourishment for our soul ... and Because we acknowledge that only He has the words of eternal life."

(St. Josemaria Escriva) Praise be Jesus Christ... Now and Forever.

