

# The Real Presence of Christ

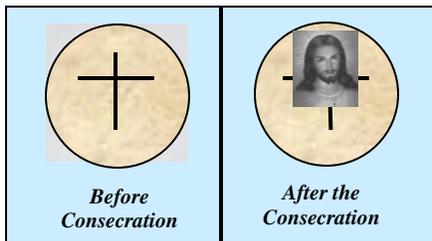
## THE REAL PRESENCE



**"Take and eat.  
This is my Body..."**

As Catholics we believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. The Council of Trent states that: "the Blessed Eucharist contains truly, really and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently Christ whole and entire..." (Chapter vii, Can1).

Through the power of the Holy Spirit the substance (the nature) of the bread and wine changes. Physical and spiritual qualities are joined, and the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ; the whole Christ is present in a sacramental way. The change takes place when the words of consecration are pronounced by the priest in Holy Mass.



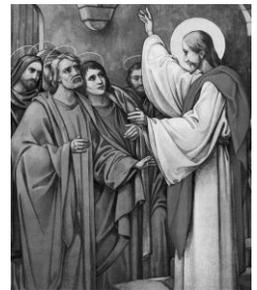
As the "heavenly" Second Person of the Trinity "miraculously" assumes a human nature, in the Eucharist the "earthly" bread and wine "miraculously" assumes a divine nature. It becomes Christ. A physical link is made to the person of Christ under the appearance of bread and wine.

Belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist is one main thing that distinguishes us from our Protestant brothers and sisters. It does make a difference whether Catholic or not, when you consider what our Catholic faith has to offer: Christ himself present in the Eucharist. Of course Christ is present in other ways; the Eucharist offers another and greater way -- Christ Himself.

Those who broke off for the Catholic Church were unable to take this Sacrament with them, because it requires a validly ordained priest (or bishop) through whom Christ chose to work this miracle. So, what our Protestant brothers and sisters have in their communion practices is a symbol. For Catholics we have the real thing. If we realize this truth, then we should never wish to leave the Catholic Church.

Jesus leaves us a sacrament in which he gives himself to us. His love is so great he desires to give himself to us in this special and unique way. It is not a symbol, but a reality. He desires to be close to us, to unite with us, to be part of us. He gives himself to us in the Eucharist to be the life and food of our souls: "... the one who feeds on me will have life because of me...whoever eats this bread will live forever." (John 6:57, 58).

It is hard to understand. It requires faith. It requires a belief and trust in the words and actions of Jesus: "Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink." (John 6:53-55).



**"I am the  
Bread of Life"**

When some of his disciples leave, Jesus does not try to stop them. He meant what he said literally and they interpreted it that way. He was offering us something that at first glance seems ridiculous. It is the way he chose to remain physically connected to us; a way to incorporate us more fully into his Mystical Body.

The Real Presence is a mystery, not an impossibility. It can't be explain in scientific terms, but neither can God himself. It is not contrary to reason, yet it is beyond our minds to comprehend fully.