

Detailed notes on Real Presence (Revision)

Biblical References: John 6:22-71, Matthew 26: 26-29, 1 Corinthians 11: 27-29

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

The most important text is John Chapter 6, verse 22 to 71 the so called Bread of Life Discourse. The Scripture demonstrates the very bold statements of Jesus revealing once again his divinity, and authority and importantly the very striking mandate that one must eat his flesh and drink his blood *literally* for eternal life.

At the time Jesus was in Caparnum speaking to a crowd including his disciples. With the claims that he was making, the people challenged him for a sign much like the sign that Moses gave the people so they would believe in him. That sign was the manna from heaven. So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you perform? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world." 34 They said to him, "Lord, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." 42 They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'" ... 47 (Jesus) - "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life." 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

The crowd was quite astonished at these words as he declared his divinity by referring to "my Father" and by saying that he was the bread that has come down from heaven yet more was to come.

(The language Jesus spoke passed on to us in Greek uses the words: "*Phago*", a generic word for eating, but then switches words to "*Trogo*", which means "to gnaw or chew." This makes his claim even more emphatic as "*Trogo*" is the kind of sound or action that one chewing or an animal gnawing at something makes. He used the word "*Soma*" meaning the whole body from top to bottom" then emphatically used "*Sarx*" which refers specifically to the soft, fleshy skin that covers the body. This was an affront to the Jewish people and the disciples because of the dramatic imagery and just as importantly it was against Jewish law to eat flesh with blood, and certainly cannibalism which was suggested here was opposed to Jewish law. *This is to say that Jesus is explicitly stating literally to gnaw at his flesh and to drink his blood.*)

But Jesus did not correct them nor does he back off for example stating that he's speaking in terms of metaphor or symbolism but ratchets up the rhetoric by stating the following:

52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

53 So Jesus said to them, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; 54 he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever.”* 59 This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Caper’naum. 60 Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” 66 After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him.

It is clear that his disciples knew that he meant literally that one must chew or gnaw on his flesh and drink his blood as they began to murmur and decided to draw back from him and many returned to their homes. Had this been symbolism or metaphor Jesus would have clarified that so as not to lose his followers, but he didn't. He increased his emphasis instead. The words were so strong that Jesus used, it is thought at that point that this precipitated the doubt and betrayal of Judas.

67 Jesus said to the twelve, *“Will you also go away?”* 68 *Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”* 70 Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” 71 He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was to betray him.

But note that while others were leaving him to return to their homes due to the very unusual comments that Jesus had made Simon Peter had the strength and the faith and knowledge that he does not always fully comprehend the Lord but knows that Jesus does not lie and is the way, the truth, and the life. Thus as leader he stated when challenged, *“you have the words of eternal life and we have believed and have come to know that you are the holy one of God.”* He knew everything would become clear later as it did at the Last Supper.

Just for the record there are examples of Jesus clarifying when the disciples or crowds were possibly confused: Examples of Jesus clarifying metaphor or parable -John 4:31–34- John 4:31–34, where Jesus’ disciples tell him he needs to eat and Jesus responds, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” they thought he had hidden actual food when he was offering a metaphor, and clarified Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work” Matthew 16:5–12. There Jesus tells his disciples to “look out, and beware of the leaven” of the Sadducees and Pharisees ¹² Then they understood that he had not told them to beware of the bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Jesus did not adjust, clarify, or alter the strong message above to “eat his body and drink his blood” in spite of their being scandalized by his preaching even as some started to abandon him and return to their home and previous lives.

Ultimately, a few chapters later in John after descriptions of miracles, of raising Lazarus, healing the blind etc. it becomes apparent that Jesus who is becoming a threat and a pariah will be at risk and this ultimately leads to his passion which begins with the Last Supper otherwise known as the First Eucharist. Peter’s wisdom and leadership would be rewarded as it becomes clear at the Last Supper that the consecration of bread and wine to Jesus body and blood is the answer to the confusion and “murmuring” created by his words in the Bread of Life Discourse as consuming consecrated bread and wine would not scandalize in the same manner described in John, Chapter 6 of eating flesh and drinking blood.

At the Last Supper-

“Take and eat; this is my body...This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” changes the “essence of the bread and wine into the Real Presence. ”

Other biblical references:

Matthew 26: 26-29

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”²⁷ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you;”²⁸ for this is my blood of the^[d] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. **(The Last Supper or Lord’s Supper)**

1 Corinthians 11: 27-29

27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves.

From these latter two passages one can see that a blessing is said over the bread and wine stating that it is the blood of the new covenant in Matthew-not just wine. Note the emphasis in Paul's letter to the Corinthians of the sacredness of receiving the true body and blood of the Lord in a state that is not unworthy i.e. sinful state. One could reasonably assume this very serious recommendation is because all knew that the consecrated bread and wine represented the Real Presence and was not just symbolic.

To clarify further one must engage some philosophical and theological conversation related to the substance or essence of something and the nonessential components or so-called "accidents" of an object. As practicing Catholics we know that we consume the body and blood of Christ not metaphorically but the Real Presence as consecrated bread and wine. A more philosophical discussion that relates to the "essence" or "substance" of something versus the "accidents" of an object is required. Brandon Vogt apologist offers an example.

(See Illustration on next page-Illustration of Substance , Essence, “Accidents”, non essential traits –see illustration on next page)

TRANSUBSTANTIATION:

"trans" means change, to **change** from one thing to another, and **"substantiation"** refers to **substance**, meaning the essence of something, what a thing *is*

Transubstantiation means changing from one substance or essence to another.

A substance is what a thing fundamentally *is*, its essence, while its **accidents** are its non-essential components.

Philosophers for thousands of years dating back to Aristotle in the 4th century BC, distinguished between the substance of a thing and its "accidents." A substance is what a thing fundamentally is, its essence, while its accidents are its non-essential components or traits.

Example (see previous page also): source: Brand Vogt – <https://www.claritasu.com/>

What is a car? What is the essence of a car? Most would say it is a motor vehicle with wheels for transportation, that is the essence of a car and every car has at least those features. Utilizing philosophical/theological language, "accidents" or nonessentials are traits and may include size, color, model of the car. That is, they are externals and nonessentials that do not remove the essence of car simply by varying those changeable features. "Accidents" is a philosophical term that describes mutable characteristics that do not change essence. So the accidents or external traits are independent of the substance or essence. The word substance here means the essence or what something actually is. With the Eucharist the essence is changed not the physical bread or wine that we see with our human eyes. That is by the consecration and calling upon the Holy Spirit to bless the bread and wine it transforms its essence to the Body and Blood of Christ. Yes, it looks like bread and wine, but bear in mind the God who created the universe, freed the Israelites, parted the seas, gave the Israelites manna, raised the dead, healed the leper, made of a humble young Jewish virgin the Mother of God, and raised Jesus from the dead, is who consecrates and transforms the bread and wine via a priest "in persona Christi". That is to say that God can and does speak into the bread and wine the new essence of his son Jesus' Body and Blood that we "see" with the eyes of faith and does so at each Holy Mass.

Early Church Fathers

Early Church Fathers

First century bishop, St. Ignatius of Antioch 110 A.D.(a student of Polycarp who was mentored by John the Apostle) , wrote, "Because the heretics refuse to acknowledge the Holy Eucharist to be the same flesh which suffered for our sins and was raised again to life by God the Father, they die a miserable death and perish without hope." St Ignatius of Antioch-So places within the historical context, Jesus has died less than 100 years ago. And the early church is already teaching the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

"The food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by Him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nourished, is both the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus."

Justin Martyr (150 A.D.)

"Jesus has declared the cup, a part of creation, to be His own Blood, from which He causes our blood to flow; and the bread, part of creation, He has established as His own Body, from which he gives increases to our bodies." Irenaeus (180 A.D. (also a student of Polycarp who was mentored by John the Apostle)

This unanimity among the early church fathers explains why even Martin Luther, who was the most influential of the Protestant reformers believed in the real presence of Christ and the Eucharist.

"Only the devil, or those inspired by the devil, could possibly interpret 'this is my body' to mean 'this is just a sign of my body.'" Martin Luther

Cyril of Jerusalem, in his Catechetical Lectures, presented in the middle of the fourth century, told his listeners: "Do not, therefore, regard the Bread and Wine as simply that; for they are, according to the Master's declaration, the Body and Blood of Christ. Even though the senses suggest to you the other, let faith make you firm. Do not judge in this matter by taste, but be fully assured by faith, not doubting that you have been deemed worthy of the Body and Blood of Christ

Hippolytus of Rome, a third century bishop and prolific apologist, consistently taught that the Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his "Fragments from the Scriptural Commentaries of Hippolytus", he explicitly describes the "honoured and undefiled body and blood" that are "administered and offered sacrificially at the spiritual divine table... as a memorial of that first and ever memorable table of the spiritual divine supper .

"And the greatest of the Western Fathers, 'St. Augustine of Hippo, also held to the dense objectivity of Christ's Eucharistic presence. In the line of Origen, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and others, Augustine maintains that the consecratory words of Jesus have a transformative power, so that when they are pronounced over the bread and wine at Mass, a very real change takes place.'

Augustine, in one of his homilies, comments, "That which you see on the Lord's table is bread and wine. But when a word is added, that bread and wine become the body and blood of the Word. . . . Without the word, the oblation is bread and wine, but, when the word is added, the oblation is at once something else. St. Augustine of Hippo" (Bishop Barron -**This Is My Body** -2023)

The Didache and Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus , and the later The Didascalia are manuals or Catechisms of the early church that directed the liturgy and the hierarchy of the church as well as other topics . Among other ancient documents are the historical foundation of liturgical practices and teaching of the church.

The Didache, also called the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," is an early Christian manual that combines moral instruction, * liturgical directions, and in brief church order. Though not part of the

canonical New Testament, it was highly regarded by many early Fathers and served as a practical handbook for the life of the first Christian communities. (Magisterium AI)
(My note : While it is not explicit regarding the Real Presence, it is supportive. It was a guide respected by Early church fathers who acknowledge the body and blood of Jesus to be consumed and not just symbolic.) The Didache can be downloaded at : <https://archive.org/>

* The Eucharistic prayer and its theology

Chapter 9 of the Didache records the exact words of the thanksgiving. The prayer thanks the Father “for the holy vine of David ... which you made known to us through Jesus your servant” (the cup) and “for the life and knowledge ... which you made known to us through Jesus your servant” (the broken bread) . The language mirrors the biblical institution of the Eucharist, identifying the wine with the “holy vine of David” (Christ’s blood) and the bread with “life and knowledge” (Christ’s body). The prayer then links the scattered bread becoming one with the gathering of the Church, expressing the Eucharist as a sign of ecclesial unity. (Magisterium AI)

Historical background

The work was written in Greek in the first century or early second century and was widely circulated, as evidenced by citations from Clement of Alexandria and Origen. It was rediscovered in a 5th century codex by the Greek Orthodox Bryennios in 1873, confirming its ancient provenance. Its simplicity and early date features—such as the baptismal rite, and the Eucharistic prayers—suggest it belongs to the earliest stage of Christian worship.

The Catechism and related

Catholic Catechism—paragraphs 1345– 1347 paragraphs 1373 through 1384

1345 The Mass of all ages

As early as the second century we have the witness of St. Justin Martyr for the basic lines of the order of the Eucharistic celebration. They have stayed the same until our own day for all the great liturgical families. St. Justin wrote to the pagan emperor Antoninus Pius (138–161) around the year 155, explaining what Christians did:

On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits. When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things. Then we all rise together and offer prayers for ourselves ... and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation. When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss. Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren. He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (in Greek: eucharistian) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts. When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: “Amen.” When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the “eucharisted” bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.169*

1346 The liturgy of the Eucharist unfolds according to a fundamental structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day. It displays two great parts that form a fundamental unity: —the gathering, the liturgy of the Word, with readings, homily, and general intercessions; —the liturgy of the Eucharist, with the presentation of the bread and wine, the consecratory thanksgiving, and communion. The liturgy of the Word and liturgy of the Eucharist together form “one single act of worship”; the Eucharistic table set for us is the table both of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord.¹⁷¹

1353 In the epiclesis, the Church asks the Father to send his Holy Spirit (or the power of his blessing¹⁷⁸) on the bread and wine, so that by his power they may become the body and blood of Jesus Christ and so that those who take part in the Eucharist may be one body and one spirit.

1376 The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: “Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called **transubstantiation**.”²⁰⁴

1381 “That in this sacrament are the true Body of Christ and his true Blood is something that ‘cannot be apprehended by the senses,’ says St. Thomas, ‘but only by faith, which relies on divine authority.’ For this reason, in a commentary on Luke 22:19 (‘This is my body which is given for you.’), St. Cyril says: ‘Do not doubt whether this is true, but rather receive the words of the Savior in faith, for since he is the truth, he cannot lie.’”²¹⁰

1384 The Lord addresses an invitation to us, urging us to receive him in the sacrament of the Eucharist: “Truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.”

1385 To respond to this invitation we must prepare ourselves for so great and so holy a moment. St. Paul urges us to examine our conscience: “Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion.

Church, U.S. Catholic. Catechism of the Catholic Church: Second Edition

Lateran Council IV (1215): DS 800-802

One indeed is the universal Church of the faithful, outside which no one at all is saved, in which the priest himself is the sacrifice, Jesus Christ, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the species of bread and wine; the bread (changed) into His body by the divine power of transubstantiation, and the wine into the blood, so that to accomplish the mystery of unity we ourselves receive from His (nature) what He Himself received from ours. The sanctioned the use of the term transubstantiation*.

The Council of Trent (1545–1563)

The Eucharist – The Thirteenth Session defined the doctrine of **transubstantiation**, stating that the whole substance of bread and wine is changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, and that denial of this conversion is anathema^{5 6}. The council also affirmed the Eucharist as the “source and summit” of Christian life, the unbloody re-presentation of Christ’s sacrifice⁷.

St Ignatius. The Companion to the Catechism of The Catholic Church: A Compendium of Texts (p. 53). Ignatius Press.