



## PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE HOLY MASS

18

What are the principal ways in which Christ is present in the celebration of the Holy Mass?

**Christ makes himself present in the Holy Mass also:**



In his Word (Sacred Scripture), which is read and explained during the Liturgy of the Word;



In the same assembly of the faithful who is gathered in his name **“where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them”** (Mt 18, 20);



In the person of the celebrant.



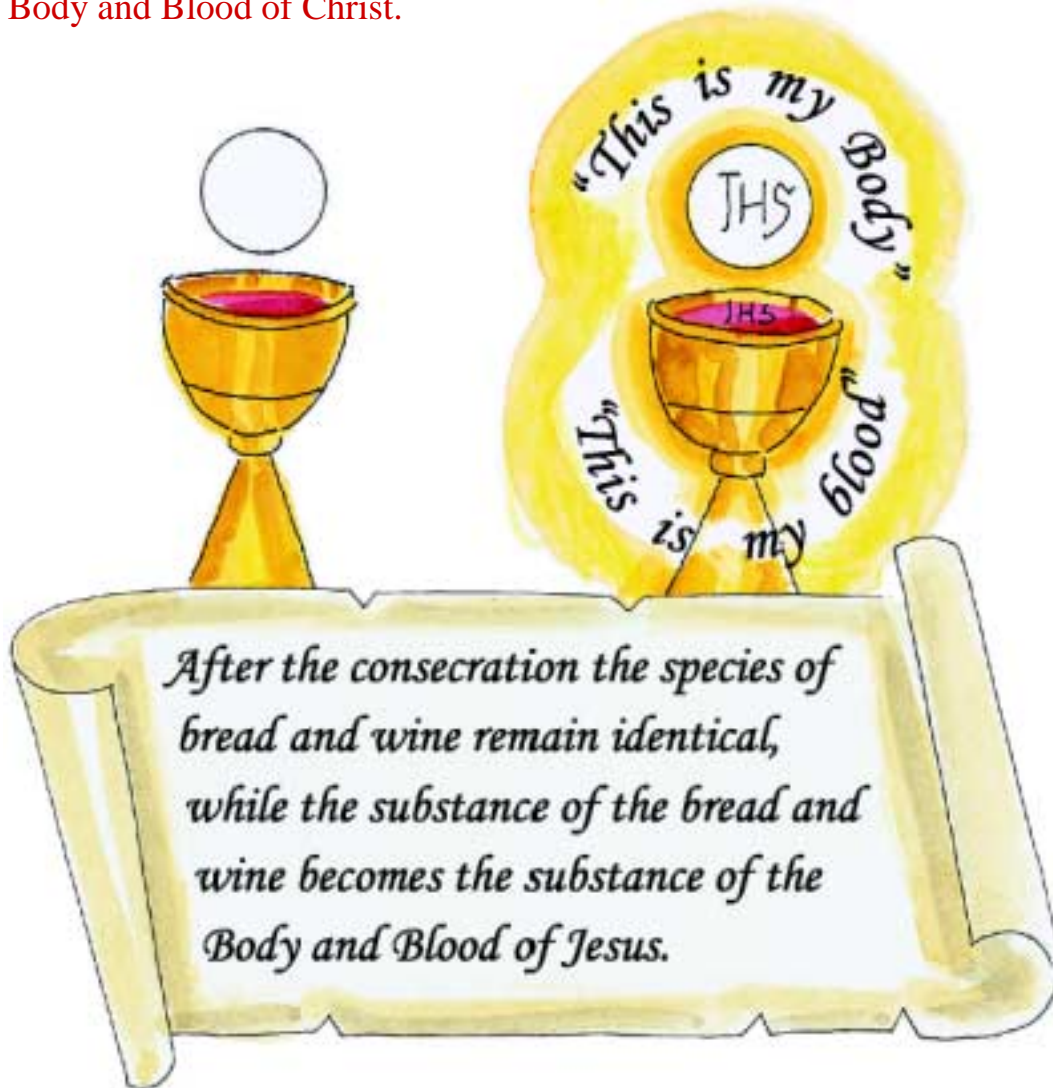


## 19 What are the Eucharistic species?

When we say *Eucharistic species* we mean the perceptible characteristics (taste, touch, sight, color, form, weight....) of the bread and wine, and therefore, their physical chemical and nutritional properties.



After the **Consecration**, the bread and wine retain these perceptible characteristics. They are unchanged. However, in their whole substance (their very essence, their deepest and most intimate identity) and only in it, **they are no longer bread and wine but the Body and Blood of Christ.**



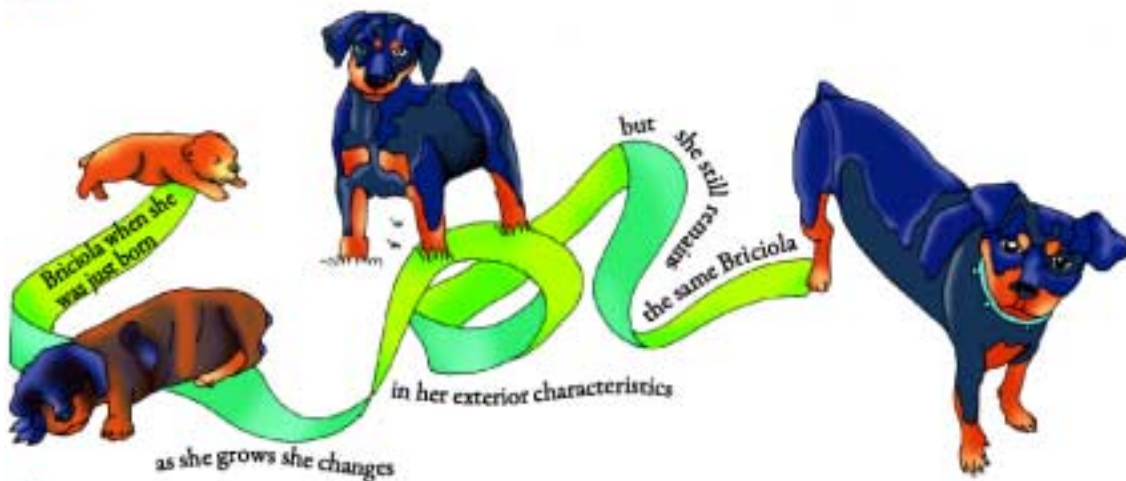
When we receive Communion, we notice that the exterior characteristics or forms of the bread and wine remain identical after the consecration. Even their taste, smell, color and size remain unchanged. However, their substance has changed and has become the substance of the Body and Blood of Jesus. We believe this through faith, according to Jesus' word.

In the examples that we see here of Mark and Briciola the dog, the exact opposite takes place.





In this example we have shown Mark at different ages: even if his exterior characteristics change as time passes (first of all he was an embryo, then a child, then a young boy, then an adult, and finally an elderly man...), his substance, that is, his very being as Mark has remained identical. He was the same person, the same Mark, when he was newborn just as he is the same Mark now that he is eighty years old.



Here we see Briciola growing up. Her exterior characteristics, or accidental looks, have changed (color, height, etc. ...), but her substance has always remained the same: Briciola in fact is still Briciola even though her looks have changed as time has passed by. In relation to these two examples, the opposite takes place regarding the Eucharist: the substance changes while the exterior characteristics remain the identical.



After the Consecration, the bread and wine are not a symbolic sign (as for example a flag is for its country), but are really the Body and Blood of Christ.



*The Eucharist is Really the Body and The Blood of Jesus*



*The flag, on the other hand, is a symbol of a country*



The believer recognizes and welcomes this mysterious fact through Faith, relying on the Words of Christ: **“This is my Body... This is my Blood.”**



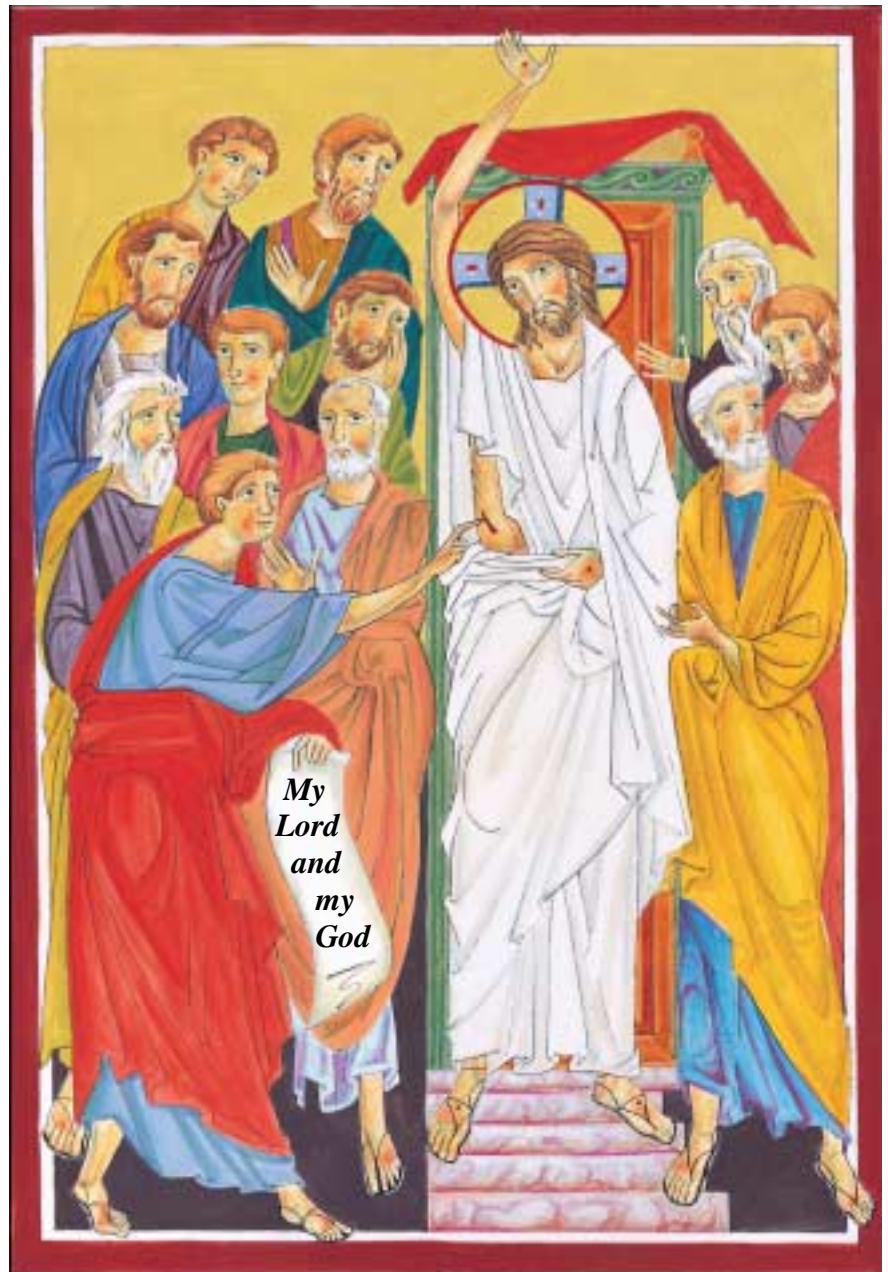
For this reason only those who have Faith and have been baptized in the Catholic Church are admitted to Holy Communion.







So, it is important to affirm the specific, superior, and unique nature of this presence, as well as highlighting its qualitative difference with respect to other, albeit important, ways that the Risen Lord is present in his Church and in the world.



The Risen Jesus, appearing to the Apostles, turns to Saint Thomas who did not believe that he was risen, and said to him: **“Put your finger here, and see my hands; put out your hand, and place it in my side; doubt no longer, but believe!”** (*Jn 20, 27*). Listening to the Word and receiving the Body of the Lord in this way, we too are able to contemplate the Risen Lord Jesus who is present in the “holy signs” and we confess with the Apostle Thomas: **“My Lord and my God!”** (*Jn 20, 28*). (See *Dies Domini*, 29).

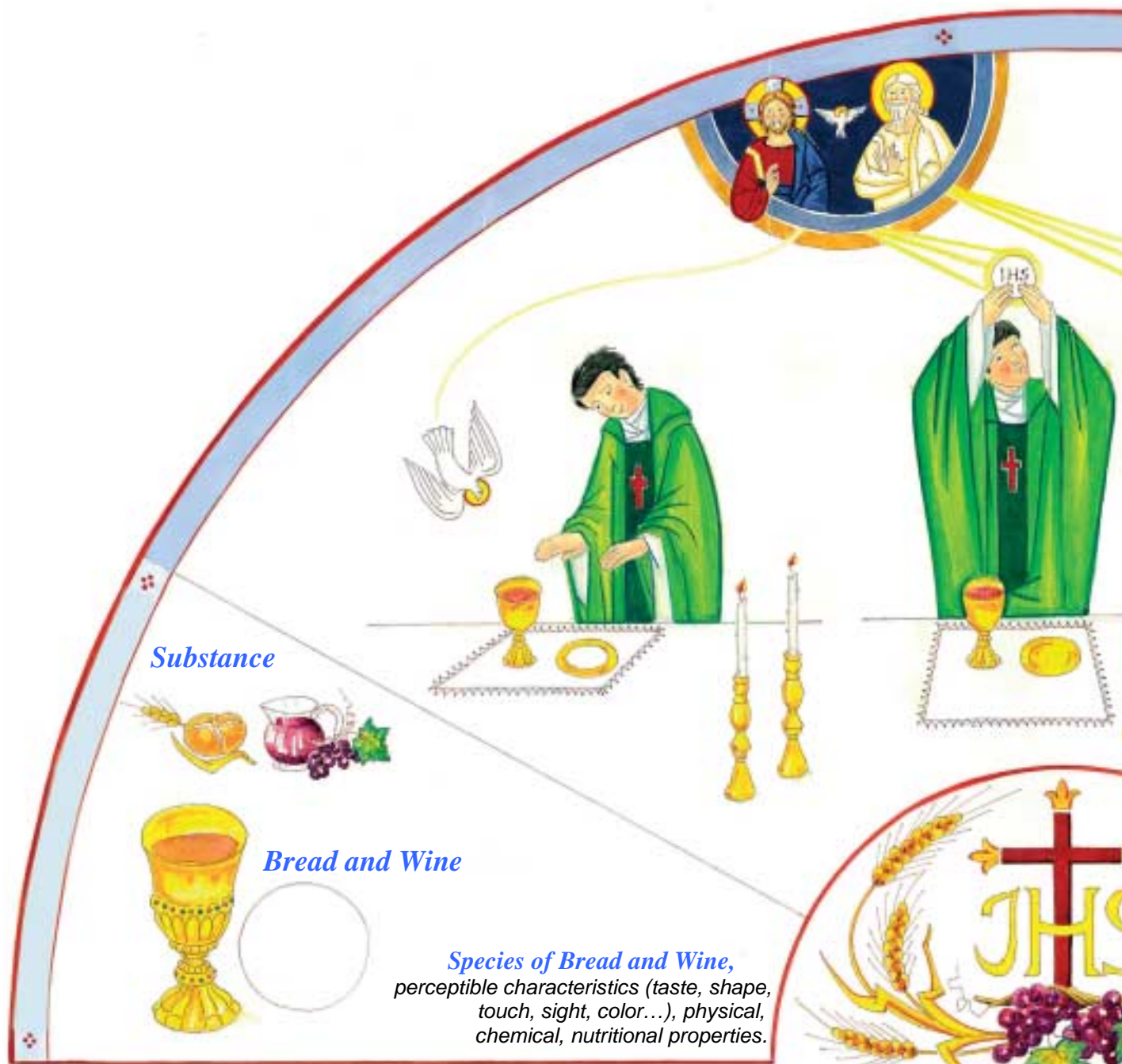




**21** What does the word transubstantiation mean?

The word **transubstantiation** (which means *trans*-movement of *substantia* substance) indicates (as we have already seen in question n. 19) that the substance of the bread and wine is transformed into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ, without undergoing any exterior change in the Eucharistic species. For this reason during the Holy Mass, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread which is made from wheat, and the wine, which is made from fermented grapes, fully become the Body and Blood of Christ.

**THE CONSECRATION**

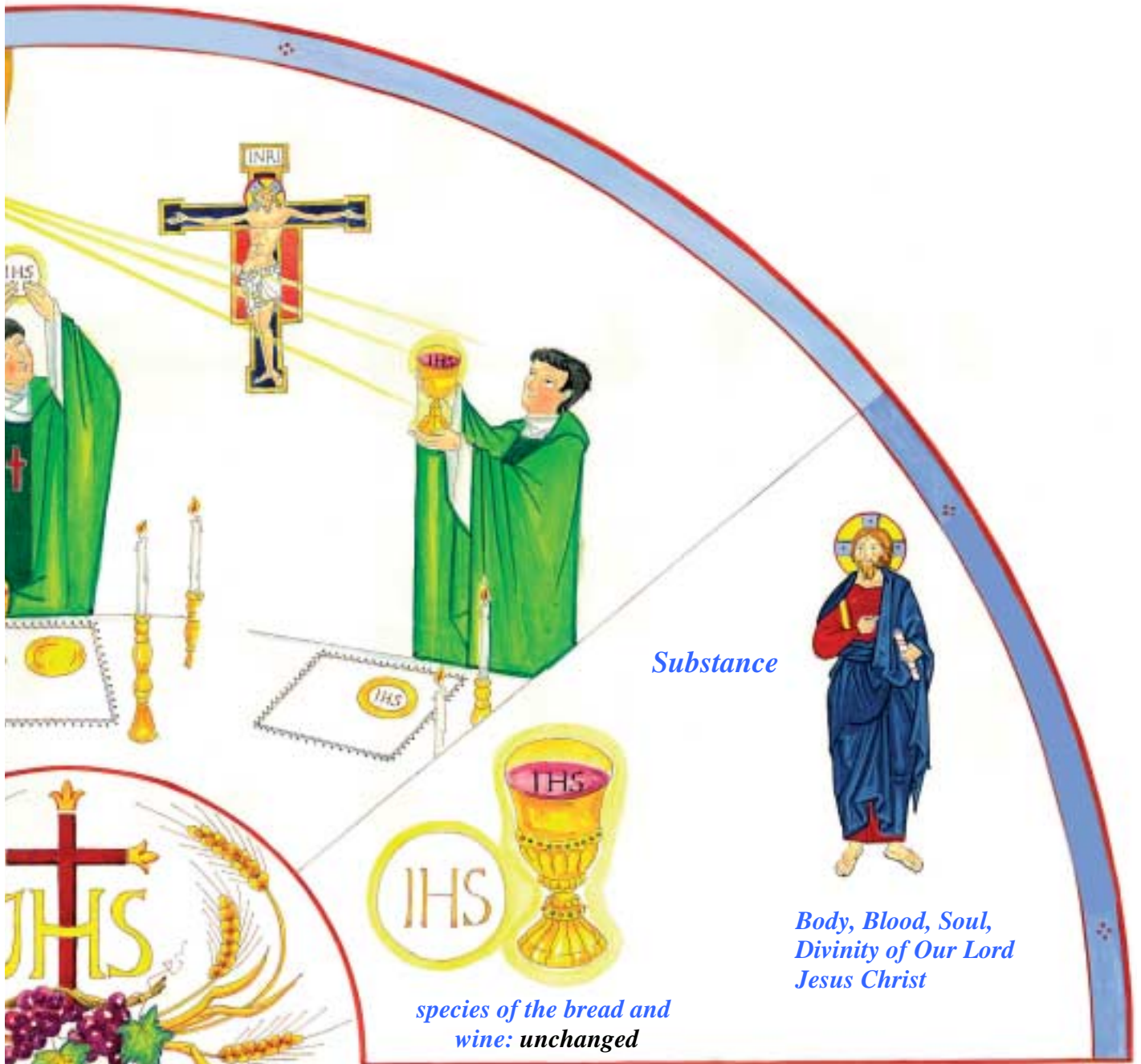


**BEFORE the CONSECRATION**

“Do this in memory of me”



**THE CONSECRATION**



*Substance*

*Body, Blood, Soul,  
Divinity of Our Lord  
Jesus Christ*

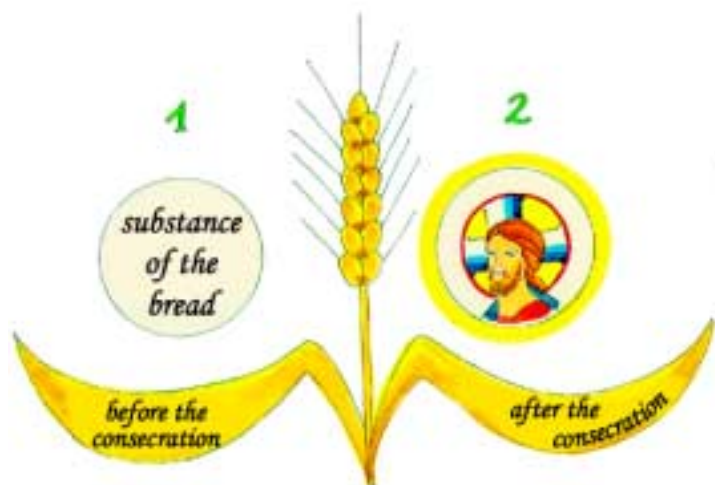
*species of the bread and  
wine: unchanged*

**AFTER the CONSECRATION**

*“Do this in  
memory of me”*

## 22 When does the transubstantiation take place?

It begins in the Eucharistic Prayer at the moment of the Consecration and continues as long as the Eucharistic species subsist.



*The species or external appearances, or accidental appearances, of the Host both before and after the Consecration do not change: in fact the colour of the Host, its taste, its smell, its size... all remain the same. What has, in fact, changed is its substance which has become the substance of the Body and Blood of Jesus.*



*The species or external appearances, or accidental appearances, of the wine both before and after the Consecration do not change: in fact the colour of the wine, its taste, its smell, its quantity... all remain the same. What has, in fact, changed is its substance which has become the substance of the Body and Blood of Jesus.*



*At the Last Supper Jesus said:  
"Take this all of you and eat it.*

*This **IS** my Body...*

*Take this, all of you, and drink from it.*

*This **IS** my Blood,,.*

*Using these words Jesus meant that,  
after the consecration, the Bread and the  
Wine truly are his Body and his Blood,  
and not a symbol or just a sign.*

23 In what way is the presence of Christ in the Eucharist:



**SACRAMENTAL?** Since it is fulfilled under the Eucharistic forms of bread and wine (transubstantiation). The appearances of the bread and wine indicate where the Body and Blood of Christ are present. They are signs of a mysterious reality that is present in them.



**COMMUNION?** Because it nourishes the communion of love with Christ, and among us.



**ECCLESIAL?** Because it springs from and works inside the assembly of the baptised faithful.



**EUCCHARISTIC?** Because it is part of the celebration of the Holy Mass and forms a unity with the other ways by which Christ is present.



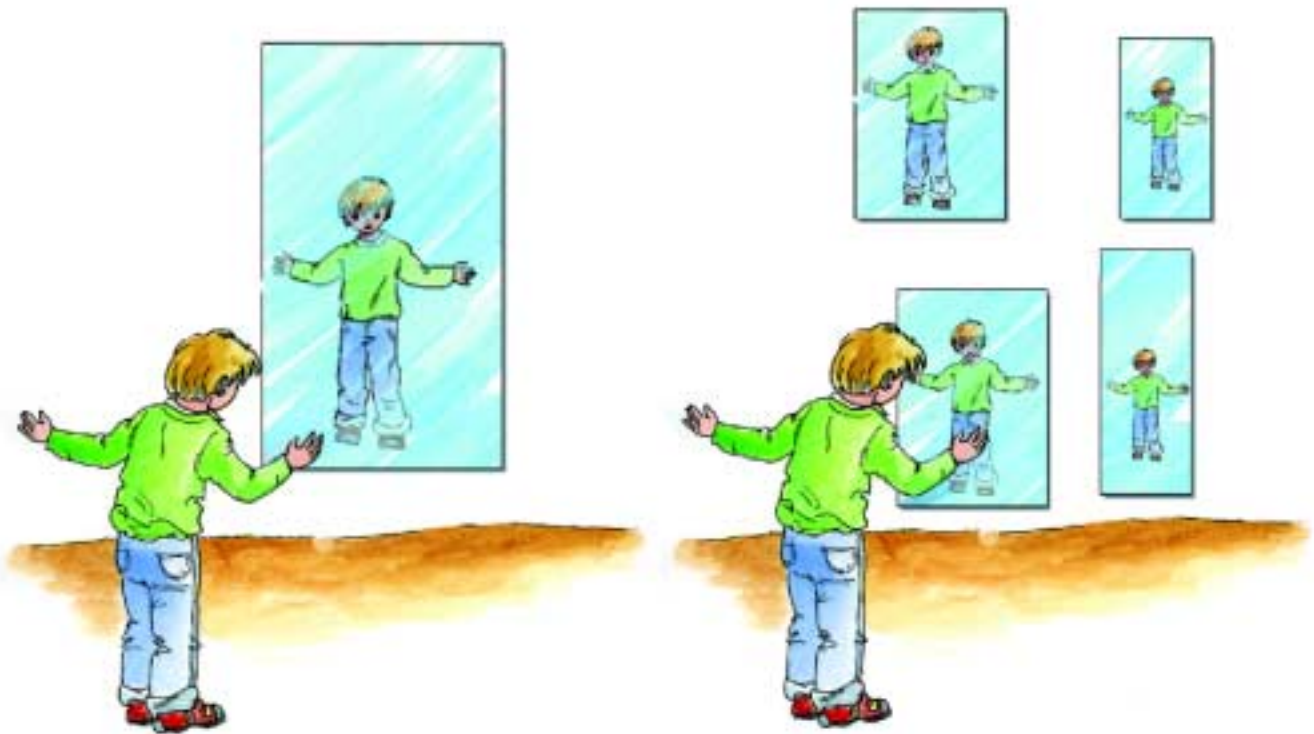
**ESCHATOLOGICAL, THAT IS RELATING TO THE FINAL THINGS?**

Because Christ who is present and at work is the one who is Risen, and he will return at the end of time, when there will be “**new heavens**” and a “**new earth**” (2 Pt 3,13). Then God will be “**all in all**” (1 Cor 15,28). The Eucharist attests to this and anticipates this future reality.

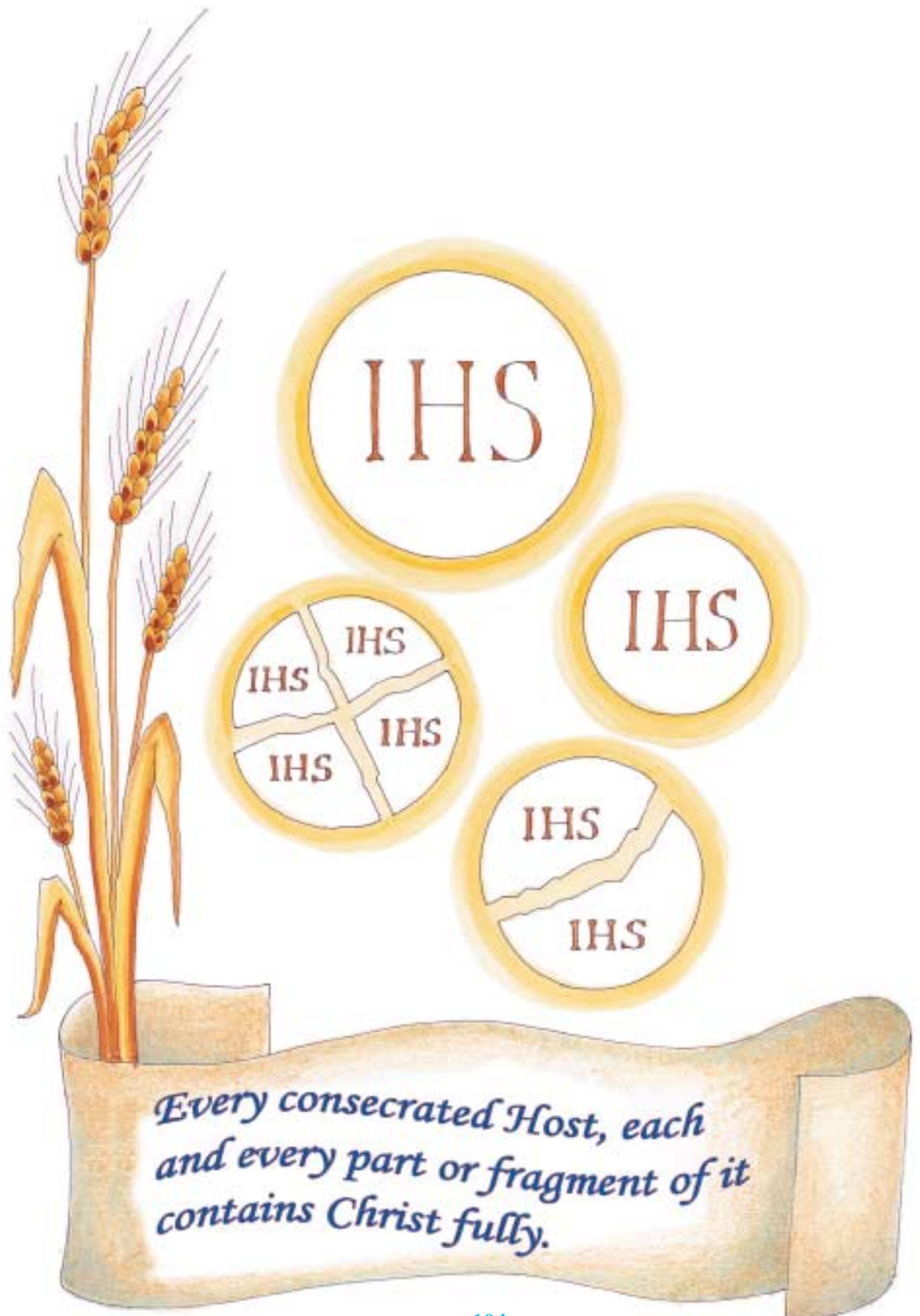


**24** In what way is the presence of Christ complete in each or part of the Eucharistic species?

Christ is present fully and completely in the consecrated Host and Wine, even in every single fragment or drop. For this reason the Body of Christ is not divided when the consecrated Host is fractioned, and it remains fully complete in every single part. For this reason we must always show great care and respect even for the smallest fragment of consecrated bread and drop of consecrated wine.



Saint Thomas gives us a useful example by describing a reflection that is seen in a mirror: When the mirror is broken, every fragment is still able to reflect the object in its entirety in the same way as the mirror did when it was intact.

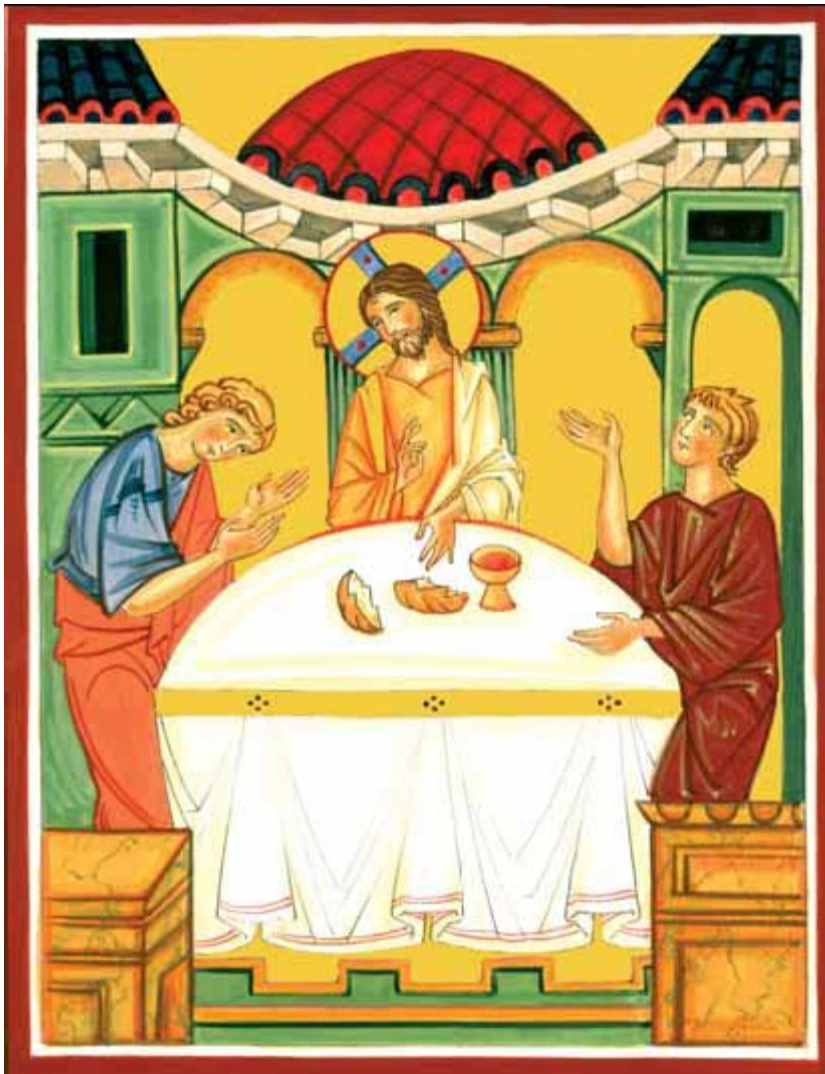






## 25 Why did Christ want to give us this Eucharistic presence?

The presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist was something He wished to give us in order to be close to us, and so that He could nourish us with his very Himself and remain within the ecclesial community. For this reason we are asked by Faith to be aware that when we are in the presence of the Eucharist we are in the presence of Christ. It is his very presence that gives all the other dimensions of Banquet, Memorial of the Passover, eschatological anticipation a meaning that is raised beyond the level of a pure symbolism. The Eucharist is the *Mystery of the Presence*, by which the promise of Jesus of remaining with us until the end of time is fulfilled in a supreme way. It is a consoling sign of the love, power and genius of our Divine Savior. He wished to enter into an intimate union with believers of every generation and wanted to do it in a way that would satisfy our human nature of incarnated spirits (composed of a body and a soul).



*“The Church draws her life from Christ in the Eucharist; by Him she is fed and by Him she is enlightened. The Eucharist is both a mystery of faith and a ‘mystery of light.’ Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the faithful can in some way relive the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: ‘their eyes were opened and they recognized him’ (Lk 24,31) (...). In reply to the request made by the disciples of Emmaus that Jesus would stay ‘with’ them, Jesus answered with an even greater gift: by the Sacrament of the Eucharist he found a way to remain ‘in’ them. To receive the Eucharist is to enter into deep communion with Jesus. ‘Remain in me and I in you’ (Jn 15,4)”*  
*(Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 6, 19).*

**26** In what way is the Holy Mass also a Sacrament of the absence of Christ?

The Holy Mass is celebrated as a command of the Lord, “**until he comes.**” So it is celebrated during this time of the Lord’s ‘*absence*’ until he will return: on that day there will no longer be any need to celebrate the Eucharist because everyone will be seated at the Table in the Kingdom of God, that is, in Paradise, and “**God will be all in all**” (1 Cor 15,28).

