



The Eucharist and Sanctity

Why Do We Believe?

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On the answer to why do we believe depends in large measure whether we shall only know about sanctity or also attain it, whether holiness will remain only an idea or whether we shall actually become holy. What a difference!

Why do we believe that the selfsame body that Christ had in His visible stay on earth is the body, now glorified, we now worship and receive invisibly on earth today? You see, Christ is *on* earth! The final reason is, of course, because this is what He told us. What He said must be true because Christ who is God cannot lie.

But why do we believe in terms of the promises He made? What blessings and benefits did He assure those who believe in this Eucharistic Mystery? All the blessings that Christ promised to those who believe in the Holy Eucharist are summed up in His own masterful promise of *life*. Those who believe will receive *life* and the life that He promised was *zoé* – the kind of life that belongs to God, the kind of life that Father, Son and Holy Spirit shared and interchanged from all eternity. Those who believe will receive this life. Those who do not believe will die. What kind of life was Christ talking about? It must have been the supernatural life of grace in our souls, of partaking or participation in His own divine life.

Suppose we go on asking a series of questions where the answer can be yes or no:

- Is it possible for a person to be physically alive, but spiritually dead? Yes or no? YES.
- Is it possible for a person to be just barely alive? Yes or no? YES.
- Is it possible for a person to be more alive than just scarcely breathing supernaturally? Yes or no? YES
- Is it finally possible for a person to be very alive with divine grace, vitally alive, brimming, tingling, vibrating, bursting with God's life in his soul? Yes or no? An emphatic YES!

This, in homely language, is what the Savior promised those who believed in His Real Presence. He assured them and, therefore, assures us, that we shall be not only alive, but filled with His life, full to brimming and flowing over with strength and power and wisdom and peace and all manner of holiness. This is what sanctity is all about. It is the muchness of the good things of God. It is the more and more and still more of the life of God in our souls. More still, He promises that,

provided that we believe in Him in the Eucharist, He will sustain this life in our souls into eternity. In other words, being alive now we shall never die. And most marvelous, He will even make this life pour from our souls into our bodies risen from the grave on the last day and glorified by the vision of God. No wonder the Eucharist is called *panis vitae*, the Bread of Life. It is that, and let us remind ourselves, and here is the condition, one condition, that before we eat this bread with our lips, we take it by faith into our hearts. Indeed, unless we first have faith, we shall, as Paul tells us, “eat it to our malediction.” Only believers can benefit from this Bread of Life, only believers can profit from the Blessed Sacrament, and only believers can grow in spirit by partaking of the Eucharist depending *always* on the measure of their faith. Those who believe deeply in the Real Presence will benefit greatly from the Real Presence; those who believe weakly will also benefit accordingly. The Eucharist is capable of working miracles in our lives. So it can – after all, the Eucharist is Jesus. He worked – change the tense – He works miracles, but as it depended then (remember, Christ could not work miracles in certain places for lack of faith), the same now. It depends on the depth and degree of our faith.

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