

Fr. Perozich comments –

Former archbishop of Santa Fe wrote this in 1995. Bullet points here are my selection of his own words which need no comment from me, except that this is what Catholics need to hear from bishops conformed to Christ to teach, guide, and sanctify as Jesus did, rather than fossil fuels as politicians and ngo's proclaim.

- *Our Catholic teaching that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus, not bread and wine, is clearly taught in the Bible and throughout the 2,000-year tradition of the Church.*

- *The teaching of Jesus in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel is very clear: "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 up on the last day. For My flesh is true food and My blood is true drink. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me and I in him" (John 6:53-56).*

- *How does this change take place? It happens during the eucharistic prayer of the Mass.*

At that time, the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, as the Church has always taught. Although they still look like bread and wine, they have, by divine power, actually changed into His Body and Blood. How can we know this? It requires faith.

- *What more personal relationship is there than to be nourished by the Body and Blood of Jesus, than receiving Him with love and devotion?*

- *We should not receive Communion if we are conscious that we are in a state of serious sin.*

- *Priests and catechists must not hesitate to teach this clearly to the people on a regular basis. [that may have been fine in Santa Fe in 1995 but woes will come upon a priest from some bishops when the priest charitably teaches this]*

- *People who are married outside the Church are not supposed to receive Communion.*

- *We must be careful to genuflect reverently when entering the church where the Blessed Sacrament is kept*
- *stop referring to Holy Communion as the "bread" or the "wine" rather than as "the Body of Christ" and the "the Blood of Christ."*
- *Respect for the Eucharist also means fasting for an hour before Communion, arriving on time for Mass, and not leaving early.*
- *Respect for the Eucharist likewise means there should be no more than subdued conversation before and after Mass in the church. Even though many enjoy socializing, others are there to pray in the presence of the Eucharist and their rights should be respected.*
- *Respect for the Eucharist means we will attempt to make visits to the church to pray before the Blessed Sacrament; pastors should make every effort to ensure that churches or Blessed Sacrament chapels are open for visitation. One of the most fruitful forms of prayer for a Catholic is that of praying before the Lord who is present in the tabernacle.*

Is the Eucharist Really Christ's Body and Blood?

by Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan

DESCRIPTION

A letter written by Archbishop Sheehan in response the results of a Gallup poll that was taken on Catholic attitudes toward Holy Communion.

LARGER WORK

The People of God

PUBLISHER & DATE

Archdiocese of Santa Fe, N.M., May 1995

Recently, a Gallup poll was taken on Catholic attitudes toward Holy Communion. The poll showed serious confusion among Catholics about one of the most basic beliefs of the Church.

- Only 30 percent of those surveyed believe they are actually receiving the Body and Blood, soul and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine.
- 29 percent think they are receiving bread and wine which symbolize the spirit and teachings of Jesus and, in so doing, are expressing their attachment to His person and words.
- 10 percent understand their action to be receiving bread and wine in which Jesus is present.
- and 23 percent hold that they are receiving what has become the Body and Blood of Christ because of their personal belief.

Any well-informed Catholic will recognize that only the first option, chosen by the 30 percent, is true Catholic teaching. The other options represent various forms of Protestant belief.

As Archbishop, I am deeply concerned about the inaccurate and distorted views of the Eucharist apparently held by many of our people. I believe it is important to clearly understand the correct doctrine; then, to live according to that doctrine.

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

Our Catholic teaching that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus, not bread and wine, is clearly taught in the Bible and throughout the 2,000-year tradition of the Church.

The teaching of Jesus in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel is very clear: "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 up on the last day. For My flesh is true food

and My blood is true drink. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me and I in him" (John 6:53-56).

John goes on to say that, even though many disciples would not accept this teaching and went away, Jesus did not attempt to bring them back by saying He was only speaking symbolically.

The early Church took this teaching seriously. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul says, "Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the Body and Blood of the Lord... for anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgement on himself." (1 Corinthians 11:27, 29) Paul's statement makes sense only if the bread and wine have become the real Body and Blood of Christ.

How does this change take place? It happens during the eucharistic prayer of the Mass.

At that time, the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, as the Church has always taught. Although they still look like bread and wine, they have, by divine power, actually changed into His Body and Blood. How can we know this? It requires faith. It is a mystery which, like love, we will never fully understand. The Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, His death and Resurrection are other mysteries which, along with the Eucharist, we will never fully comprehend in this life.

Catholic teaching on the Eucharist gives great inspiration and strength to believers. Jesus is really present and, under the appearance of food, nourishes us for our journey through life.

Our Protestant friends speak often and correctly of the need for a personal relationship with the Lord. What more personal relationship is there than to be nourished by the Body and Blood of Jesus, than receiving Him with love and devotion? And, since the Eucharist takes place in the context of a community meal, we are also united with our brothers and sisters of the faith. To make the presence of Jesus only a "symbolic" one is, therefore, to strip the eucharistic celebration of its true meaning.

FAITH AND REVERENCE

A sound belief in the Eucharist moves us to some important practical conclusions. Since the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus, Catholics must have the utmost respect and reverence for these precious gifts.

We should not receive Communion if we are conscious that we are in a state of serious sin. Saint Paul makes it clear in the text from 1 Corinthians 11:27, 29 quoted above —that we must not receive the Lord unworthily. Other than in crisis situations, where a perfect act of contrition can suffice, anyone who is aware of serious sin must receive the sacrament of penance before going to Communion.

Priests and catechists must not hesitate to teach this clearly to the people on a regular basis.

People who are married outside the Church are not supposed to receive Communion. They should approach the marriage tribunal to see if their marriage can be validated and, thereby, return to the sacrament. I know how difficult and painful it is for people who are not able to receive Communion; and I suffer with them. It can be of some comfort to know they may come forward at Communion time to receive blessings from a priest or other minister. (Non-Catholics and others not receiving Communion may also receive blessings.)

In a recent article, Bishop William Weigand of Sacramento notes a lack of respect for the Eucharist in recent years. I believe he is correct. **We must not allow the simplification of the rites of the Mass, such as the reception of Holy Communion in the hand or while standing, to breed an informality that erodes our belief in the Real Presence. We must be careful to genuflect reverently when entering the church where the Blessed Sacrament is kept; or, at least to make a deep bow of respect. We have let sloppy language lead to a disrespect of the Eucharist. I call on all Catholics in our archdiocese to stop referring to Holy Communion**

as the "bread" or the "wine" rather than as "the Body of Christ" and the "the Blood of Christ."

A MATTER OF RESPECT

Respect for the Eucharist also means fasting for an hour before Communion, arriving on time for Mass, and not leaving early.

Respect for the Eucharist likewise means there should be no more than subdued conversation before and after Mass in the church. Even though many enjoy socializing, others are there to pray in the presence of the Eucharist and their rights should be respected.

Respect for the Eucharist means we will attempt to make visits to the church to pray before the Blessed Sacrament; pastors should make every effort to ensure that churches or Blessed Sacrament chapels are open for visitation. One of the most fruitful forms of prayer for a Catholic is that of praying before the Lord who is present in the tabernacle.

Respect for the Eucharist means that priests, deacons, and eucharistic ministers will treat the Body and Blood of Christ with utmost respect; and purify the Communion vessels reverently.

I also encourage more frequent use of the rite of Benediction and eucharistic devotions such as perpetual adoration with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. I ask that vocations to the priesthood and religious life be a particular intention for such Eucharistic prayer.

TEACH THE TRUTH

I call upon pastors and teachers to review basic Catholic teaching on the Eucharist with their people. I urge Catholic parents to teach the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist to their children. We must recapture a well-deserved sense of the holy, an awareness of mystery as it relates to the Eucharist which has always been a part of our Catholic tradition.

*A letter written by Archbishop Sheehan in response the results of
a Gallup poll that was taken on Catholic attitudes toward Holy
Communion.*

LARGER WORK

The People of God

PUBLISHER & DATE

Archdiocese of Santa Fe, N.M., May 1995

This item 1340 digitally provided courtesy of CatholicCulture.org