

Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ  
June 6 & 7, 2015

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### The Mystery of the Eucharist

My dear Brothers and Sisters.

When I was studying theology for four years in England at Heythrop College, about 40 miles North of Oxford, I remember there were quite a few Jesuit scholastics from India. I was impressed by the observation that they did not seem to have too much difficulty with what we call a Mystery. A Mystery seemed to them as clear as day. Their problem centered more on such matters as the principle of contradiction, a problem of logic where there are only two mutually exclusive choices without a third alternative. Its either this or that. For them it was more like either this or that, or that, or that, or that, and so on. This kind of problem of logic was unreal for them, but a mystery did not seem to be much of a problem. Here, in our Western culture, we may come to mass on Sundays out of a sense of duty, or habit, or for human company, or for the art of the liturgy, while the real and greatest reason should be that we come here to meet and to be with Jesus in the real presence of God in the most holy Eucharist, the greatest Mystery of all.

You know, my Sisters and Brothers, it seems to me that children have a wonderful way to handle mysteries. They accept them with faith, and if it tastes good for the soul, they accept them joyfully. That's just the way it is. In the eyes of a child for whom everything is something new, and everything is a bit of a mystery, so is Jesus in the Eucharist: Yes and wonderful.

Do you remember the day of your first communion? I remember mine most vividly. And this is the real story. I received my first communion much younger than the age of 7, the official time for first communion in Hungary. How come? It was probably because my brother and I (he was three years older than I) we did like to serve at mass in a Jesuit church, and may be because my uncle, my Mom's brother, was a Jesuit, I can't tell. Nonetheless, when we came out of the church after my first communion, I was in seventh heaven of happiness, and was running all over the place. Finally my Mom, sort of worrying that I might hurt myself said to me: Stop running, because Jesus will leave your heart. Hearing this, I put both my hands over my heart to make sure that Jesus won't do that, and kept running just a little more. From this I know that a child has a wonderful sense about such a great and beautiful mystery as God's presence in the most holy Eucharist. And no questions need to be asked.

And here is another real story that happened right here in this church many years ago. This is about the encounter between Jesus in the Eucharist and a little girl who loved to serve at mass, but she was a bit too young to do that. She was liable to entertain the congregation and turn around by jumping up into the air and coming down in the right direction. The Sister called on her only as a last resource when there was no one else available. She came here from Poland with her parents who then studied at SU. Her name was Annia Prusvisniovsky. One morning she came early with the hope that may be this will be the day when she will be asked to serve at mass. And her wish came true. There she was sitting next to me on my right with a happy smile on her face like a small mark on the tip of a huge heap of happiness in her heart. When the time came at offertory to put the candles on the altar she could carry only one at a time because they were very heavy. She managed somehow by embracing it and holding it close to her, and then she plopped it down on the altar the best way she could, first one then the other. They were no way in line with anything, certainly not in line with each other. I am very fussy about the neatness of the altar; everything must be exactly right. So I told to myself that it's OK, I will straighten out the crooked candles when I go to receive the offertory gifts, the bread and the wine. When the moment came to do so, it suddenly hit me that this wonderful little girl got up early this morning and came to the church with the hope that may be today she will be able to serve at mass. She is doing the very best she can, and the crooked candles are the clear signs that she is here serving at mass. Realizing this, I left everything just the way it was. I would not touch the candles for anything. And all that because in the deep Mystery of the Eucharist we truly meet God's wonderful love and mercy.

My Sisters and Brothers, when we receive the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Jesus, as being real food and real drink, Jesus becomes a very important part of our lives, and we become a real part of Jesus's Body and Blood, that has been already raised from the dead and so does not know death any more. Oh my dear Lord. Just imagine for a moment that you are driving on Thompson road toward Shopping Town. And suddenly it all changes, because the word death suddenly does not exist any more. It has been erased from all dictionaries, and it became a word that has no meaning what so ever. What a change! What a feeling of peace and joy and total freedom of all fear. If you were to feel that way suddenly, you might think that you had an accident driving that happened so fast that now you have no conscious memory of it at all. And now that you have died you realize that you are totally alive and death is really no more. What a wonderful feeling this liberation, this joy. Then slowly it all goes back the the accustomed ways of things, as you find yourself driving on Thompson road toward Shopping Town. Communion with Jesus is not just a fleeting moment of the imagination, but it is for real. Jesus said: Those who eat my Body and drink my Blood will never die.

And just one more remark. When we hear the priest say the words: This is my Body and this is my Blood, Jesus is the speaker. The priest is no more than the pen in the hand of the writer. No more than the pen in the hand of the writer. May be the children are right. They don't try to understand the Mystery, they simply live it with great and genuine joy and loving gratitude. Amen.