Deacon Evan G Wittig June 15, 2021

The Host and

The Mystical Body of Christ

 Once during adoration, I contemplated the fullness of the Eucharistic Host. It was the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Holy communion, along with baptism, makes us the Mystical Body of Christ. What else can we say about the Host? Is the fullness of the Trinity there? Is my personal salvation present? Is eternity in the Host? Is the whole Church present? Is the One Man present, uniting all things in himself? When we say the Church is the body of Christ, do we mean that literally, or is it a metaphor? Can all the things we say of Jesus Christ apply to the Host, the Mystical Body of Christ?

 “I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; this is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that a man may eat it and not die.” (Jn 6) “At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's Body and blood.” (CCC1333) “Saint Paul says in his letter to the Ephesians that *we are members of his body,* of his flesh and bones. He is not speaking of some spiritual and incorporeal kind of man, *for spirits do not have flesh and bones.* He is speaking of a real human body composed of flesh, sinews and bones, nourished by the chalice of Christ’s blood and receiving growth from the bread which is his body.” (St Iraneus) So, the same Jesus that said “I am the bread from heaven,” said “this is my body” and “this is the blood of the new and everlasting covenant.” Jesus said it, the bible said it, Church Fathers said it, the Catechism of the Catholic Church says it, that settles it for me! God can do what he wants, don’t you think? We have only to believe him.

 Holy Communion takes place within the context of the Holy Eucharist. The Catechism says: "At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.'"(CCC1323) The Catechism also says: “The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice: "The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different." "And since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner. . . this sacrifice is truly propitiatory." (CCC 1367) The Sacrifice of Christ is timeless, the Eucharist is timeless, the Host is timeless. The man, Jesus Christ of Nazareth has one foot in time. God, Jesus Christ the Son of God, has one foot in eternity. God’s time is always the eternal now. You don’t need a time machine to be at Calvary, just attend mass with faith and a little imagination.

 “The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. God alone can make it known to us by revealing himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” (CCC 261) “The Incarnation of God's Son reveals that God is the eternal Father and that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, which means that, in the Father and with the Father the Son is one and the same God.” (CCC 262) Jesus said “***You’ve seen me, you have seen the Father. Do you not believe that the Father is in me and I am in the Father*?”** (Jn 14). The Holy Spirit is the breath of God, also compared with wind, water and fire. He is the love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father. If the Father is in Jesus Christ, then he is in the Host. If the Father is loving Jesus in the Host and Jesus is loving the Father in the Host, then the Holy Spirit is in the Host. So, in the Eucharistic Host we have the Trinity, the fullness of God. Sadly, many Catholics do not believe in the true presence of Jesus in the Host. God has done so much to save us and come to us and be with us and we won’t even believe his own words in the bible. ***“I am the LORD your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. Open wide your mouth that I may fill it. But my people did not listen to my words; Israel would not submit to me. So I thrust them away to the hardness of their heart; ‘Let them walk in their own machinations.”*** (Ps 81.11-13) Open your mouth and receive the Lord, but people don’t listen to God. He can be present to us in any manner he chooses. We should be excited and grateful that the eternal God is eternally present to us in the Eucharistic Host and the Mystical Body of Christ.

 Our Catechism teaches us that “The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the making present and the sacramental offering of his unique sacrifice, in the liturgy of the Church which is his Body.” (CCC1362) “In the *epiclesis,* the Church asks the Father to send his Holy Spirit 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.” (CCC1353) The Eucharist, the Host, makes us the Mystical body of Christ. The whole Church is present at the Eucharist and in the Host: The Church Militant, the Church Suffering and the Church Triumphant. Every Mass is prayed for the whole Church and the whole world. With the presence of God and eternity, we also have the presence of angels and heavenly worship. Scott Hahn wrote: “When we go to Mass, the congregation is never small, even if non-existent in terms of human attendance. The angels are there as evident even in the words of the Mass, “And so with all the choirs of angels we proclaim, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy…’ The Mass itself cries out for us to be aware of our angels.” (Scott Hahn, “Signs of Life”). He also wrote: “The Eucharist is our encounter and our communion with the Blessed Trinity. That is the heart of life. Communion with the Blessed Trinity is the very definition of heaven, so it doesn’t get any better than that. The amazing thing is we have heaven at every Mass.” (Scott Hahn) St Hilary wrote: “If the Word has truly been made flesh and we in very truth receive the Word made flesh as food from the Lord, are we not bound to believe that he abides in us naturally? Born as a man, he assumed the nature of our flesh so that now it is inseparable from himself, and conjoined the nature of his own flesh to the nature of the eternal Godhead in the sacrament by which his flesh is communicated to us. Accordingly we are all one, because the Father is in Christ and Christ in us. He himself is in us through the flesh and we in him, and because we are united with him, our own being is in God.” (From the treatise on the Trinity by Saint Hilary of Poitiers). In the Host, the Mystical Body of Christ, we are joined to Christ Jesus and the Father, God is in us and “our own being is in God.” The Host is human and Divine, who could ask for anything more? Nothing is more important than union with God!

**St Paul wrote: *“I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received,*** ***with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love,*** ***striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace:*** ***one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call;*** ***one Lord, one faith, one baptism;*** ***one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*** (Eph 4.1-5) “***We are all united as one in the One Man, Jesus Christ. “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross [through him], whether those on earth or those in heaven***.***”*** (Col 1.17-20) Jesus, the Son of God, is preeminent, and the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him, therefore the fullness of the Godhead resides in the Mystical Body of Christ, his Church, and the Host, which is literally the Mystical Body of Christ. In the MBC, Christ reconciles the world to God and holds all things together. The Host is pre-eminent because Jesus is pre-eminent. “***But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh,*** ***abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, that he might create in himself one new person***[***\****](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2#57002015-1)***in place of the two, thus establishing peace,*** ***and might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it.”*** (Eph 2.13-16) There is a oneness to the Mystical Body of Christ and the One Man, Jesus Christ.

 If the Mystical Body of Christ is in the Host, then I am in the Host and the Host is in me. St Teresa of Avila wrote: *“Christ has no body now, but yours. No hands, no feet on earth, but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ looks compassion into the world. Yours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which Christ blesses the world.*” The Church is literally the Mystical Body of Christ. The Eucharistic Host is literally the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. Since the Host is Jesus Christ, what we say of Jesus can be said of the Host and the Mystical Body of Christ. Jesus told his disciples, “If they hated me, they will hate you.” (Jn) Can you see how our humanity is elevated by attending Holy Mass and receiving the Eucharistic Host? We are united with Jesus, the Father, the Holy Spirit, the saints and angels in heaven, the suffering souls in purgatory and the Church Militant on earth! We may see our local liturgy and think of ourselves and our church as something small and insignificant. Open up your mind and heart and realize the size, scope and power of the Mystical Body of Christ!

Is the fullness of the Trinity in the Host? Yes. My personal salvation present because Jesus is my salvation. Is eternity in the Host? Yes. Is the whole Church present? Yes. Is the One Man present, uniting all things in himself? Yes. When we say the Church is the body of Christ, do we mean that literally, or is it a metaphor? The Church literally is the Mystical Body of Christ with Christ Jesus as it’s head and heart. Can all the things we say of Jesus Christ apply to the Host, the Mystical Body of Christ? Yes. You can look at the Host and say “You are my God, my heavenly bread, my food and drink, my rock, my fortress, my redeemer, my home, my healer, my Teacher, my Lord and God, my only Eternal Love, my Father, my Creator, my Sanctifier, my Advocate, my Brother, my eternal Friend.”

Come often to visit Jesus in the exposed Eucharistic Host, or hiding in the tabernacle, the reality of the presence of God himself is still true. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever and he is waiting by the well of salvation to ask you for a drink. He is thirsty for your love and presence. Come and see him.