

Fr. Rudy's Reflections  
The Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
August 18, 2024

### The Real Presence of the Eucharist

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

It is the Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, and in this week's continuation of Jesus's Bread of Life discourse, Jesus presents the consummation of all his teachings from John, Chapter 6. This passage is one of the most stunning declarations in the New Testament, not only for the Jews of that day, but for us today as well. In our modern world, human beings rely on facts, provable outcomes, qualitative and quantitative analyses, metrics, and optics, so clearly Jesus's assertion that one must eat his flesh and drink his blood in order to achieve eternal life are difficult words for us to embrace. And for the Jews, who were forbidden to consume animal blood in any form, his words were shocking and objectionable. Yet, this belief—the transubstantiation of bread and wine to become the body and blood of Jesus Christ—is one of our core Catholic beliefs: the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Christ is tangible, and he is present at every Mass, although this transformation cannot be measured or seen by any one of us. It is through faith that we accept this teaching, and we have held it true across the centuries.

Perhaps the beautiful words of others—saints and scholars alike—will help light the way:

*"He who is all-knowing knew of nothing more that he could give than the Eucharist. He who is all-powerful could not do any more than he does in the sacrament and he who is all loving had nothing more that He could give. The Eucharist is a Divine storehouse filled with every virtue."*—St. Augustine

*"This morning, while I was celebrating the Eucharist, I thought about this a lot because it is what gives us life. Indeed, the Eucharist is God's response to the deepest hunger of the human heart, the hunger for authentic life because in the Eucharist Christ himself is truly in our midst to nourish, console and sustain us on our journey."*—Pope Francis

*"In this world there is nothing of the Most High Himself that we can possess and contemplate with our eyes, except His body and blood."*—St. Francis of Assisi

*"Here on earth it's impossible to perform a more meritorious act than visiting Jesus often in the Eucharist. If you took all of the good works done by all of the humans who have ever lived in all of history and stacked them all up and multiplied them by a million, they wouldn't equal the merit, the virtue and the worth of one Mass. The Eucharistic sacrifice is Christ's infinite merit, infinite value."*—St. Teresa of Avila

*"You come to me and unite Yourself intimately to me under the form of nourishment. Your Blood now runs in mine, Your Soul, Incarnate God, compenetrates mine, giving courage and support. What miracles! Who would have ever imagined such!"*—St. Maximilian Kolbe

*"With the Eucharist the intimacy becomes total; the embrace between God and man reaches its apex."*—St. Pope John Paul

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. Rudy