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Bread of Life

Lesson 6: The Presence of Christ

Opening Prayer

LCE page #31-38

Pope Paul VI—*Mysterium Fidei* (1965)

The 8 ways Christ is present in His Church

- (1) Prayer
- (2) Works of Mercy
 - 7 Corporal works of mercy
 - 7 Spiritual works of mercy
- (3) Pilgrimage
 - Christ says that He is the Way, the Truth, the Life.
- (4) Preaching
- (5) Magisterium
 - To teach, heal, and govern—the mission of the Church
 - Christ is Prophet (teach), Priest (heal), King (govern).
 - We are baptized into this mission to be priest, prophet, and king.
- (6) Sacrifice of the Mass
- (7) Sacraments
- (8) Real Presence (Eucharist)

Ask your child: Can you name all the sacraments?

- **What's the difference between Baptism and the Eucharist? Reconciliation and the Eucharist? Etc.**
- **Why is the Eucharist the crowning, the greatest of all?**
 - The other sacraments point us to Christ, but only the Eucharist really *is* Christ.
 - We don't call this sacrament "real" because the others are not real, but because it truly is Christ.
 - It is not just a symbol, or some connection to His glorified Body, because it actually *is* His Body.
 - If it were just limited to symbolism, it would not be the greatest of all Sacraments.

Looking at the 8 ways Christ is present, how do you/your family live these out? How could you do better in making Christ present in your everyday life?

(1) Prayer

- Prayer is essential for the presence of Christ. No matter where we are, we can pray, and Christ will be present.

(2) Works of Mercy

- We should see Christ in everyone we encounter. No matter what we are doing or who we are serving, we should see Christ and the saints in them. The inconveniences and chores begin to have a deeper meaning.

(3) Pilgrimage

- We should always keep in mind that we are on a journey towards Heaven. Whatever is leading us down the wrong path, or leading us further away from Heaven, should be cut out of our life.

(4) Preaching

- Devotion to the Word of God, study and reading of Scripture.
- St. Jerome: "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ."

(5) Ruling and Governing

- We should show respect and obedience to the Pope, and our bishops, priests, and deacons.
- We should always strive to follow the laws of the Church and live out her commands.

(6) Mass

- We should participate at Mass every Sunday and holyday, and whenever else we are able.
- We should be present and active in the Mass, offering up our own needs, the intentions of others, and our very selves to the Father, along with Jesus Christ.

(7) Sacraments

- The sacraments were given to us by Christ to help us have a deeper relationship with Him and to give us grace to help us in our lives and on our journey towards Heaven.

(8) Eucharist

- Fostering a deep love for Our Lord, truly and really present in the sacrament of the Eucharist.
- We should go to Mass and Adoration to grow closer to Our Lord in the Eucharist.



MYSTERIUM FIDEI

ENCYCLICAL OF POPE PAUL VI

September 3, 1965

ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST (excerpt)

CHRIST SACRAMENTALLY PRESENT IN THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

34. The few things that We have touched upon concerning the Sacrifice of the Mass encourage Us to say something about the Sacrament of the Eucharist, since both Sacrifice and Sacrament pertain to the same mystery and cannot be separated from each other. The Lord is immolated in an unbloody way in the Sacrifice of the Mass and He re-presents the sacrifice of the Cross and applies its salvific power at the moment when he becomes sacramentally present— through the words of consecration—as the spiritual food of the faithful, under the appearances of bread and wine.

Various Ways in Which Christ is Present

35. All of us realize that there is more than one way in which Christ is present in His Church. We want to go into this very joyful subject, which the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy presented briefly, (30) at somewhat greater length. **Christ is present in His Church when she prays**, since He is the one who "prays for us and prays in us and to whom we pray: He prays for us as our priest, He prays in us as our head, He is prayed to by us as our God" (31); and He is the one who has promised, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them." (32) **He is present in the Church as she performs her works of mercy**, not just because whatever good we do to one of His least brethren we do to Christ Himself, (33) but also because Christ is the one who performs these works through the Church and who continually helps men with His divine love. **He is present in the Church as she moves along on her pilgrimage** with a longing to reach the portals of eternal life, for He is the one who dwells in our hearts through faith, (34) and who instills charity in them through the Holy Spirit whom He gives to us. (35)

36. In still another very genuine way, **He is present in the Church as she preaches**, since the Gospel which she proclaims is the word of God, and it is only in the name of Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, and by His authority and with His help that it is preached, so that there might be "one flock resting secure in one shepherd." (36)

37. **He is present in His Church as she rules and governs** the People of God, since her sacred power comes from Christ and since Christ, the "Shepherd of Shepherds," (37) is present in the bishops who exercise that power, in keeping with the promise He made to the Apostles.

38. Moreover, **Christ is present in His Church in a still more sublime manner as she offers the Sacrifice of the Mass in His name**; He is present in her as she administers the sacraments. On the matter of Christ's presence in the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass, We would like very much to call what St. John Chrysostom, overcome with awe, had to say in such accurate and eloquent words: "I wish to add

something that is clearly awe-inspiring, but do not be surprised or upset. What is this? It is the same offering, no matter who offers it, be it Peter or Paul. It is the same one that Christ gave to His disciples and the same one that priests now perform: the latter is in no way inferior to the former, for it is not men who sanctify the latter, but He who sanctified the former. For just as the words which God spoke are the same as those that the priest now pronounces, so too the offering is the same." (38) No one is unaware that the sacraments are the actions of Christ who administers them through men. And so the sacraments are holy in themselves and they pour grace into the soul by the power of Christ, when they touch the body. The Highest Kind of Presence.

These various ways in which Christ is present fill the mind with astonishment and offer the Church a mystery for her contemplation. But there is another way in which Christ is present in His Church, a way that surpasses all the others. It is His presence in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is, for this reason, "a more consoling source of devotion, a lovelier object of contemplation and holier in what it contains" (39) than all the other sacraments; for it contains Christ Himself and it is "a kind of consummation of the spiritual life, and in a sense the goal of all the sacraments." (40)

39. This presence is called "real" not to exclude the idea that the others are "real" too, but rather to indicate presence par excellence, because it is substantial and through it Christ becomes present whole and entire, God and man. (41) And so it would be wrong for anyone to try to explain this manner of presence by dreaming up a so-called "pneumatic" nature of the glorious body of Christ that would be present everywhere; or for anyone to limit it to symbolism, as if this most sacred Sacrament were to consist in nothing more than an efficacious sign "of the spiritual presence of Christ and of His intimate union with the faithful, the members of His Mystical Body." (42)