

Text of Pope Paul's Encyclical on Holy Eucharist

True Miracle At Lourdes

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Following is the second part of Pope Paul's encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* on the Holy Eucharist. The first part, published in last week's Courier, expressed the Pope's concern for recently expressed opinions contrary to the Church's traditional belief about the Holy Eucharist.

In still another genuine way Christ is in the Church she preaches, since the Gospel which she proclaims is not preached except in the name of Christ, and with the assistance of Christ, the Incarnate Word of God. In this way there is formed "one flock which trusts its only shepherd" (idem, "Contr. Litt. Petilian" III, 10, 11; P. L. 8, 353).

He is present in His Church as she governs the People of God, since her sacred power comes from Christ, and since Christ, "The Shepherd of Shepherds" (St. Augustine, "In ps. 86, 9; P. L. 37, 1100), is present to the pastors who exercise that power, according to His promise to the Apostles: "Behold I am with you all through the days that are coming, until the consummation of the world."

Moreover, in a manner still more sublime, Christ is present in His Church as she offers in His name the Sacrifice of the Mass. He is present in her as she administers the sacraments. We find deep consolation in recalling the accurate and eloquent words with which St. John Chrysostom, overcome with a sense of awe, described the presence of Christ in the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass: "I wish to add something that is plainly awe-inspiring, but do not be astonished or upset.

"This Sacrifice, no matter who offers it, be it Peter or Paul, is always the same as that which Christ gave His disciples and which is now offered in no way inferior to that which Christ offered, because it is not men who sanctify the offering of today; it is the same Christ who sanctified His own.

"For just as the words which God spoke are the very same as those which the priest now speaks, so too the oblation is the very same" ("In Epist. Ad Timotheum, Homil. 2, 4; P. G. 62, 612). No one is unaware that the sacraments are the actions of Christ, who administers them through men. Therefore, the sacraments are holy in themselves, and by the power of Christ they pour grace into the soul when they touch the body. The mind boggles at these different ways in which Christ is present; they confront the Church with a mystery ever to be pondered.

Real Presence
But there is yet another manner in which Christ is present in His Church, a manner which 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 more lovely object of contemplation, a more effective means of sanctification than all the other sacraments" (Aggidius Tomanus, "Theoremata De Corpore Christi," Theor. 50, Venetia 1521, p. 127). The reason is clear; it contains Christ Himself and it is "a kind of perfection of the spiritual life; in a way, it is the goal of all the sacraments" (St. Thomas, Summ. Theol. III, Q. 73, A. 3 C.).

This presence is called "real" — by which it is not intended to exclude all other types of presence as if they could not be "real" too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a substantial presence by which Christ, the God-Man, is wholly and entirely present (cf. Conc. of Trent, Decree on the Eucharist, Ch. 3). It would therefore be wrong to explain this presence by having recourse to the "spiritual" nature, as it is called, of the glorified Body of Christ, which is present every-

where, or by reducing it to a kind of symbolism, as if this most august Sacrament consisted of nothing else than an efficacious sign, "of the spiritual presence of Christ and of His intimate union with the faithful members of His Mystical Body" (Pius XII, Encycl. Humani, Generis, A.A.S. XLII, 1950, p. 578).

It is true that much can be found in the Fathers and in the scholastics with regard to symbolism in the Eucharist, especially with reference to the unity of the Church. The Council of Trent, restating their doctrine, taught that the Savior bequeathed the blessed Eucharist to His Church "as a symbol . . . of that unity and charity with which He wished all Christians to be most intimately united among themselves," and hence "as a symbol of that One Body of which He is the Head" (Decree "On the Eucharist," Proem, and Ch. 2).

When Christian literature was still in its infancy, the unknown author of that work we know as the "Didache or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" wrote as follows on this subject: "In regard to the Eucharist, give thanks in this manner: . . . just as this bread was scattered and dispersed over the hills, but when harvested was made one, so may Your Church be gathered into Your kingdom from the ends of the earth" ("Didache," 9:1 Funk, "Patres Apostolici," 1, 20).

The same we read in St. Cyprian, writing in defense of the Church against schism: "Finally, the sacrifices of the Lord proclaim the unity of Christians, bound together by the bond of a firm and inviolable charity. For when the Lord, in speaking of bread which is produced by the compacting of many grains of wheat, refers to it as His Body, He is describing our people whose unity He has sustained, and when He refers to wine pressed from many grapes and berries, as His Blood, he is speaking of our flock, formed by the fusing of many united together" ("Ep. Ad Magnum," 6 P. L. En 1189).

But before all of these, St. Paul had written to the Corinthians: the one bread makes us one body, though we are many in number the same bread is shared by all. (1 Cor. 10, 17).

More Than a Symbol
While the eucharistic symbolism brings us to an understanding of the effect proper to this Sacrament, which is the unity of the mystical Body, it does not indicate or explain what it is that makes this Sacrament differ from all others. The constant teaching which the Catholic Church passes on to her "catechumens, the understanding of the Christian people, the doctrine defined by the Council of Trent, the very words used by Christ when He instituted the Most Holy Eucharist, compel us to acknowledge that "the Eucharist is that flesh of Our Savior Jesus Christ who suffered for our sins and whom the Father in His loving-kindness raised again" (St. Ignatius, "Ep. Ad Smyrn." Un Oh P. G. 5, 714).

To these words of St. Ignatius of Antioch, we may add those which Theodore of Mopsuestia, a faithful witness to the faith of the Church on this point, addressed to the faithful: "The Lord did not say: This is a symbol of My Body, and this a symbol of My Blood; but: This is My Body and My Blood." He teaches us not to look to the nature of those things which lie before us and are perceived by the senses, for by the prayer of thanksgiving and the words spoken over them, they have been changed into Flesh and Blood" ("In Matth. Comm., Ch. 28 P. G. 66, 714).

The Council of Trent, basing itself on this faith of the Church, "openly and sincerely professes that within the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, after the Consecration of the bread and wine, Our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, is really, truly and sub-

stantially contained under those outward appearances." In this way, the Savior in His humanity is present not only at the right hand of the Father according to the natural manner of existence, but also in the Sacrament of the Eucharist "by a mode of existence which we cannot express in words, but which, with a mind illumined by faith, we can conceive, and must most firmly believe, to be possible to God" (Decree "On the Eucharist," Ch. 1).

Transubstantiation
To avoid misunderstanding, this sacramental presence which surpasses the laws of nature and constitutes the greatest miracle of its kind (cf. Encycl. Mirae Caritatis, Acta Leonis XIII, Vol. XXII, 1902-1903, p. 123) we must listen with docility to the voice of the teaching and praying Church. This voice, which constantly echoes the voice of Christ, assures us that the way Christ is made present in this Sacrament is none other than by the change of the whole substance of the bread into His Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into His Blood, and that this unique and truly wonderful change the Catholic Church rightly calls transubstantiation (cf. Council of Trent, "Decree on the Eucharist," Ch. 4, and Can. 2).

As a result of transubstantiation, the species of bread and wine undoubtedly take on a new meaning and a new finality, for they no longer remain ordinary bread and ordinary wine, but become the sign of something sacred, the sign of a spiritual food.

However, the reason they take on this new significance and this new finality is simply because they contain a new "reality" which we may justly term ontological. Not that there lies under those species what was already there before, but something quite different; and that not only because of the faith of the Church, but in objective reality, since after the change of the substance or nature of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, nothing remains of the bread and wine but the appearances, under which Christ, whole and entire, in His physical "reality" is bodily present, although not in the same way that bodies are present in a given place.

Ancient Witnesses
For this reason the Fathers took special care to warn the faithful that in reflecting on this most august Sacrament, they should not trust to their senses, which reach only the properties of bread and wine, but rather to the words of Christ which have power to transform and transubstantiate the bread and wine into His Body and Blood. For, as those same Fathers often said, the power that accomplishes this is that same power by which God Almighty, at the beginning of time, created the world out of nothing.

"We have been instructed in these matters and filled with an unshakable faith," says St. Cyril of Alexandria, at the end of a sermon on the mysteries of the faith, "that that which seems to be bread, is not bread, though it tastes like it, but the Body of Christ, and that which seems to be wine, is not wine, though it too tastes as such, but the Blood of Christ . . . draw inner strength by receiving this bread as spiritual food and your soul will rejoice" ("Catecheses," 22, 9; "Myst." 4; p. 33, 1103).

St. John Chrysostom emphasizes this point, saying: "It is not the power of man which makes what is put before us the Body and Blood of Christ, but the power of Christ Himself who was crucified for us. The

already in existence into what they were not. For it is no less extraordinary to give things new natures than to change their natures" ("De Myst.", 9, 50-52; P. L. 16, 422-424).

However, there is no need to assemble many testimonies. Rather let us recall that firmness of faith with which the Church with one accord opposed Berengarius, who, yielding to the difficulties of human reasoning, was the first who dared deny the Eucharistic change. More than once she threatened to condemn him unless he retracted.

Thus it was that our predecessor, St. Gregory VII, ordered him to pronounce the following oath: "I believe in my heart and openly profess that the bread and wine which are placed upon the altar, are, by the mystery of the sacred prayer and the words of the Redeemer, substantially changed into the true and life-giving flesh and blood of Jesus Christ Our Lord, and that after the Consecration, there is present the true Body of Christ which was born of the Virgin and, offered up for the salvation of the world, hung on the Cross and now sits at the right hand of the Father, and that there is present the true Blood of Christ which flowed from His side. They are present not only by means of a sign and of the efficacy of the Sacrament, but also in the very reality and truth of their nature and substance" (Mansi, "Coll. Amplias. Concil." XX, 524D).

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, dealing with the Eucharistic change, says: "Let us be assured that this is not what nature formed, but what the blessing consecrated, and that greater efficacy resides in the blessing than in nature, for by the blessing nature is changed." To confirm the truth of this mystery, he recounts many of the miracles described in the Scriptures, including Christ's birth of the Virgin Mary, and then turning to the work of creation, concludes thus: "Surely the word of Christ, which could make out of nothing that which did not exist, can change things

past 100 years have given man a view of his world such as was never previously available. For the Church to relate responsibility to this modern world, writes Horchler in the book on schema 13, it will have to overcome the habits and attitudes not just of a lifetime but of centuries.

"If the Church is to get its hands dirty doing work in the world," he says, "it will have to learn that life in the world involves doubt, contingency, and failure. . . . The Church, chiefly the clergy, must learn the habit of listening to the secular world and respecting the world's wisdom and the grace of God at work in it. . . . Most of all, the Church must learn the instinct of love and service in a modern world it has so long feared and mistrusted. . . . To begin with, for its mission in the modern world the Church needs not just a declaration on the modern world, but a new theology of the world itself."

This is the task, formidable indeed, which the bishops have taken on their shoulders and into their hearts at the Council. They deserve our interest and our prayers.

—Faber Henry Atwell

WHAT THEN is the whole point in such discussion? Anglican Bishop John A. T. Robinson says in his book "The New Reformation" that "in the long run those who change history most are not those who supply a new set of answers but those who allow a new set of questions."

And that, precisely, is what Pope John allowed—and what the Council is doing—asking a whole new set of questions without as yet having all the answers ready at hand as in the catechism.

The technological, sociological, psychological and even theological breakthroughs which have taken place within the

'Don't-Get-Me-Involved' Attitude Hit By DCCW

Pearia, Ill. — (RNS) — The laity was chided here at a Diocesan Council of Catholic Women's annual meeting for a lack of involvement. The critics were Father John McGrath, DCCW moderator of the Springfield diocese; Sister Ernest Marie, C.S.J., chairman of the sociology department at Fontbonne College, St. Louis; Thomas Klise, editor of catechetical publications for the J.G. O'Brien Co., Peoria; and Mrs. A. J. Belanger of the Family Life Bureau in Chicago.

Father McGrath told the women: "We are beset by a great evil of mediocrity. Catholics are afraid to become involved personally in things. We contribute, but we take a 'don't-get-me-involved' attitude."

The layman, according to Father McGrath, is the mediator between the Church and the world.

"Woman," said Sister Ernest Marie, "is preoccupied and meant to involve herself with others. When a woman is called upon to commit herself, she goes against her nature not to do so."

She told delegates that apostolic schools for lay leaders would perhaps be more ger-

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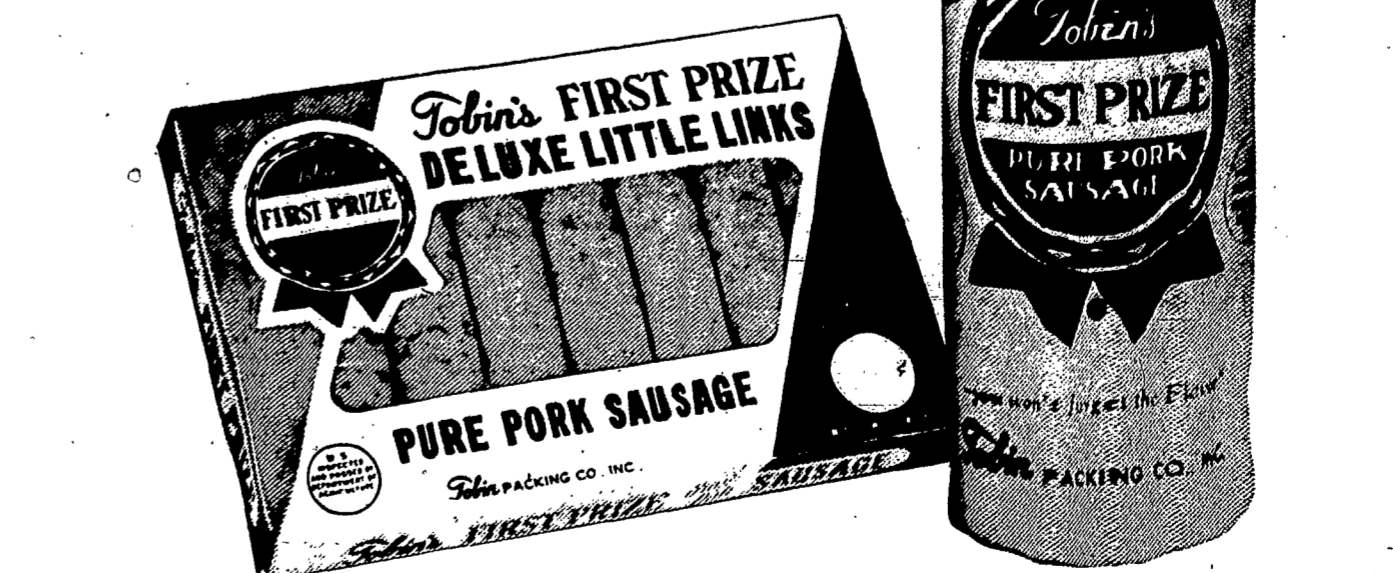
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