

THE
BLESSED EUCHARIST

THE BLESSED EUCHARIST

OUR GREATEST TREASURE

By

Fr. Michael Müller, C.S.S.R.

PRIEST OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

*“There hath stood one in the midst of you, whom
you know not. . . the latchet of whose shoe I am not
worthy to loose.”*

—John 1:26-27

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An Oblation

I offer Thee this book, O Lord Jesus Christ, Fount of eternal light, in union with that ineffable charity which moved Thee, the only-begotten of the Father, in the plenitude of the Divinity, to take upon Thyself our nature and to become man. I beseech Thee to take it into Thy divine keeping, that it may glorify Thy divine bounty towards us, vile creatures that we are. And since Thou, the Almighty Dispenser of all good things, dost vouchsafe to nourish us during our exile until, beholding Thy glory with unveiled countenance, we are transformed into Thee, grant, I beseech Thee, to all who read these writings with humility, that they may be charmed with the sweetness of Thy charity and inwardly drawn to desire the same for their furtherance in perfection, so that, elevating their hearts towards Thee with burning love, they may be like so many golden censers, whose sweet odors shall abundantly supply all my negligence and ingratitude.

Dear Mother Mary, do thou also pray to thy Divine Son for all those who may read this little book.

Protest of the Author

IN OBEDIENCE to the decrees of Urban VIII of holy memory, I protest that I do not intend to attribute any other than purely human authority to all the miracles, revelations, graces and incidents contained in this book; neither to the titles holy or blessed applied to the servants of God not yet canonized, except in cases where these have been confirmed by the Holy Roman Catholic Church and by the Holy Apostolic See, of whom I profess myself an obedient son; and therefore, to their judgment I submit myself and whatever I have written in this book.

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Preface

My Dear Reader and Brother in Jesus Christ:

Since the spirit of devotion that has urged me to write this book animates you to read it and makes us the happy children of the same loving Father, should you ever hear any person say I might have spared myself the labor, there being already so many learned and celebrated works which treat of this subject, I beg you to answer that Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Adorable Sacrament is such an abundant fountain that the more it flows, the fuller it becomes, and the fuller it is, the more it flows, which signifies that the most Holy Eucharist is so great and so sublime a mystery that the more we say of it, the more remains to be said. If St. Alphonsus could say with all truth of the Passion of Our Lord, "that eternity will not suffice to meditate adequately upon it," we may affirm the same of Jesus Christ hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, and with a thousand times more justice apply to our subject what St. Augustine says in praise of the Blessed Virgin, viz., that all the tongues of men, even if all their members were changed into tongues, would not be sufficient to praise her as she deserves.

Worldly lovers are accustomed frequently to mention and praise those whom they love, that others also may praise and applaud them; how poor and weak should we then consider the love of those who call themselves lovers of the Blessed Sacrament and yet who seldom speak of it or think of endeavoring to inspire others with a love of it. The true lovers of the

most Blessed Sacrament do not act thus; they speak of it, praise it everywhere, in public and in private; whenever it is in their power they try to enkindle in the hearts of everyone those ardent flames of love which they themselves burn for their beloved Jesus.

The object of this little book is, then, to make Jesus, in the Blessed Eucharist, more generally known and better loved. Our Divine Saviour is ready to bestow innumerable graces through this Sacrament, which are lost in consequence of the ignorance and indifference of men. When the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar is not revered and loved, scandals will abound, faith will languish and the Church will mourn. On the other hand, if this Sacrament be worthily frequented, peace will reign in Christian hearts, the devil will lose power, and souls will be sanctified. "As many as received Him to them He gave power to be made the sons of God." (*John* 1:12). It has seemed to me that a work explanatory of the prominent points of this mystery, written in a simple and familiar style, would greatly contribute to remove the obstacles to a right appreciation of this wonderful Sacrament of Divine love; and with this conviction I have ventured to lay the following pages before the public, trusting, with the blessing of God, they may prove useful to many souls.

As Almighty God in His goodness imparts His favors to His faithful followers in divers ways— sometimes by enlightening their minds in a supernatural manner, and even conversing with them familiarly, as it were—and as the nature of this work is intended to be practical, not controversial, I have thought it expedient for the edification of pious souls to introduce into it, after the manner of the Holy Fathers, both some revelations made to certain Saints and several miraculous facts concerning this mystery.

I know there are some persons who, boasting of being free from prejudices, take great credit to themselves for believing no miracles but those recorded in

the Holy Scriptures, esteeming all others as tales and fables for foolish women, But it will be well to remember here a remark of the learned St. Alphonsus, who says, "that the bad are as ready to deride miracles as the good are to believe them; adding that as it is a weakness to give credit to all things, so on the other hand, to reject miracles which come to us attested by grave and pious men, either savors of infidelity, which supposes them impossible to God, or of presumption, which refuses belief to such a class of authors. We give credit to a Tacitus, a Suetonius, and can we deny it without presumption to Christian authors of learning and probity. There is less risk in believing and receiving what is related with some probability by honest persons and not rejected by the learned, and which serves for the edification of our neighbor, than in rejecting it with a disdainful and presumptuous spirit." (*Glories of Mary.*) Hence Pope Benedict XIV (*De Canon. Sanct.*) says: "Though an assent of Catholic faith be not due to them, they deserve a human assent according to the rules of prudence by which they are probable and piously credible."

Now should the Reverend Clergy deem this publication ever so little calculated to promote devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the compiler will believe himself amply rewarded for his labor if they encourage its circulation.

Michael Müller, C.S.S.R.
St. Alphonsus', Baltimore, Maryland
December 8, 1867

Chapter 1

The Doctrine of the Real Presence

A CERTAIN man was once thrown into prison. He there suffered so much from hunger, thirst and cold that at last he was almost dead. One day the king determined to pay a visit to the captive, in order to find out how he bore his sufferings. Having put off his royal apparel, he went in disguise to the prison and asked the poor man how he fared, but the prisoner, being very sad and melancholy, scarcely deigned to answer him. When the king had gone away, the jailor said to the criminal: "Do you know who was speaking to you? It was the king himself." "The king!" exclaimed the captive. "O wretch that I am! If I had known that I would have thrown myself at his feet and clasped his knees, and I would not have let him go until he had pardoned me. Alas! What a favorable opportunity I have lost of freeing myself from this dungeon." It was thus the poor captive lamented in anguish and despair, but all was unavailing.

I think, dear Reader, you understand the meaning of this story. The sufferings of this captive represent the wretchedness of man's condition on this earth. Our true country is Heaven, and as long as we are living on earth, we are captives and exiles. We are far from Jesus Christ, our King; far from Mary, our good Mother; far from the Angels and Saints of

Heaven; and far from our dear departed friends. But very many Christians are also, in another respect, like the captive of whom I have spoken. They do not know Jesus Christ, their true King, who not only visits them, but dwells very near them. "But," you will ask, "how can Jesus Christ dwell near them without their knowing Him?" It is because He has put on a strange garment and appears in disguise. Our Lord Jesus Christ abides in two places: in Heaven, where He shows Himself undisguised, as He is in reality; and on earth in the Blessed Sacrament, in which He conceals Himself under the appearance of bread. One day a certain nun said to St. Teresa: "I wish that I had lived at the time of Jesus Christ, my dear Saviour, for then I could have seen how amiable and lovely He is." St. Teresa, on hearing this, laughed outright. "What!" said she, "do you not know then, dear sister, that the same Jesus Christ is still with us on earth, that He lives quite near us, in our churches, on our altars, in the Blessed Sacrament?" Yes, the Blessed Sacrament, or Holy Eucharist, is the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, who is truly, really and substantially present under the outward appearances of bread and wine.

This is indeed a great mystery, and the more to confirm your faith in it, I will give you some proofs for it from Scripture and tradition. The first proof is taken from the sixth chapter of the gospel of St. John. Our divine Saviour knew that if He were to teach the Jews and His disciples such a new and wonderful doctrine without having first prepared them for it, there would be scarcely one who would believe Him. When God intends to do something very extraordinary, He generally prepares men for it by revealing to them beforehand what He is about to do. Thus we know that when He intended to destroy the world by the deluge, He made it known through Noah a hundred years before this dreadful event took place. Again, when the Son of God had become man and was about

to make Himself known as the Redeemer of the world, He sent St. John the Baptist to prepare the people for His coming. Finally, when He intended to destroy Jerusalem, He foretold it by the prophets; and, Jesus Christ has also described the signs by which men may know when the End of the World is at hand. God acts thus with men because He does not wish to overwhelm them by His strange and wonderful dealings. Hence, when our divine Saviour was about to tell the people that He intended to give them His Flesh and Blood as food for their souls, He prepared them for this mysterious doctrine by working a very astounding miracle.

This great miracle was the feeding of five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes. The people, having witnessed this miracle, were all so full of reverence for Jesus Christ that they wished to take Him by force and make Him king; but Jesus, perceiving this, fled from them. They found Him again, however, on the following day, and then Jesus took occasion from the impression the miracle had made on them to introduce the subject of the heavenly food which He was about to give to the world. "Amen, I say to you," said Jesus, "ye seek Me, not because ye have seen signs, but because ye have eaten of the loaves and have been filled. Labor not for the food which perisheth, but for that which endureth to life everlasting which the Son of man will give you." (*John* 6:26-27). Here He declares that the food He was to give them would confer eternal life. Their curiosity being excited by these words, they desired to know more about this heavenly food and asked what sign He would give them and whether the food He spoke of was better than the manna from Heaven which God had given their fathers in the desert. Then Jesus said to them: "Amen, amen, I say to you, Moses gave you not the bread from heaven; but *My* Father giveth you the *true* bread from heaven; for the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life

to the world." (*John* 6:32-33).

In these words He shows the superiority of *this* bread to the manna of the Old Testament, calling it the "*true* bread from Heaven," and saying that it possesses such wonderful efficacy as to give life to the world. The Jews, hearing of such a wonderful kind of bread, said to Him: "Lord, give us this bread always." (*John* 6:34). Whereupon, He replied: "I am the bread of life; your father did eat manna in the desert, and died. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of *this* bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world." (*John* 6:52). "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him." (*John* 6:55-57). His disciples hearing this, said: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it." (*John* 6:61). Jesus, knowing that His disciples murmured at this, said to them: "Doth this scandalize you?" (*John* 6:62). Observe, He does not say you are mistaken; you do not understand Me. No, on the contrary, He insists still more on the necessity of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, unless you eat the *flesh* of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." "Many of His disciples," continues the Evangelist, "hearing this, went away and walked no more with Him."

Jesus, seeing that they would not believe that He was to give them His Flesh and Blood as food for their souls, suffered them to go away offended, and when they were gone, He said to the Twelve: "Will ye also go away?" Then Simon Peter answered in the name of all: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and know that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." (*John* 6:68-70).

Remark the noble simplicity of the Apostles' faith.

They believe the words of their Master without the least hesitation; they receive His words in *that* sense in which the others had refused to receive them; they receive them in their obvious meaning, as a promise that He would give them His *real Flesh* to eat and His *real Blood* to drink; they believe with a full faith, simply because He is "the Christ, the Son of God," too good to deceive, and too wise to be deceived; too faithful to make vain promises, and too powerful to find difficulty in fulfilling them. From this time forward the disciples were constantly expecting that Jesus Christ would fulfill His promise.

At length the long-looked-for day came. At the Last Supper Jesus took bread and blessed and gave to His disciples and said: "Take ye and eat, for this is My body." Then taking the chalice, He gave thanks and gave to them, saying: "Drink ye all of this, for this is *My Blood* of the New Testament which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sins." (*Matt.* 26:28). Now in these words we must consider especially the *Speaker*. It was God Himself. It was the same God who created Heaven and earth out of nothing; who, in the beginning, said: "Let light be made," and in an instant the sun, the moon and the stars appeared in the heavens; the same God who once destroyed the whole world by water, with the exception of eight persons; who destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha by fire from Heaven; who, by His servant Moses, wrought so many miracles in the sight of Pharaoh and conducted the Israelites out of Egypt, making a dry path for them in the midst of the Red Sea. It was the same God, Jesus Christ, who once changed water into wine; who gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and life to the dead; Jesus Christ who ascended into Heaven and who, at the end of the world, will come again with great majesty in the clouds of Heaven, to judge the living and the dead. He it was, the great Almighty God, who took bread into His

most sacred hands, blessed and gave to His disciples, saying: "*Take ye and eat: For this is My Body.*" And no sooner had He said: "*This is My Body,*" than the bread was really changed into His Body. *He* it was who, in the same manner, took the chalice, blessed and gave to the disciples, saying: "Drink ye all of this, for this is My Blood." And no sooner had He said, "This is My Blood," than the wine was really changed into His Blood.

When God speaks, what He commands is done in an instant. As He made the sun, the moon and the stars merely by saying: "Let light be made," so also at the Last Supper, by His word alone, He instantaneously changed bread into His Body and wine into His Blood. To those who doubt this, we may apply the reproof which St. Jane Frances de Chantal once gave to a Calvinist nobleman who was disputing with her father about the Real Presence. She was at that time only five years of age, but hearing the dispute, she advanced to the heretic and said: "What, Sir! You do not believe that Jesus Christ is really present in the Holy Eucharist, and yet He has told us that He is *present*. You then make Him a liar. If you dared attack the honor of the king, my father would defend it at the risk of his life, and even at the cost of yours; what have you then to expect from God for calling His Son a liar?" The Calvinist was greatly surprised at the child's zeal, and endeavored to appease his young adversary with presents; but, full of love for her holy faith, she took his gifts and threw them into the fire, saying: "Thus shall all those burn in Hell who do not believe the words of Jesus Christ."

St. Paul warmly exhorts the Corinthians to flee all communication with idolatry and to abstain from things offered to idols, and he uses the following argument to persuade them: "The chalice of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of *Christ*? And the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of the Lord?" (*1 Cor.* 10:16).

Here he expressly says that in the Holy Eucharist we communicate and partake of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. And still further on he says, in the same epistle to the Corinthians: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord." Nay, he goes farther and says: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord." (*1 Cor.* 11:29).

How could the Apostle declare that anyone who received Holy Communion unworthily would eat and drink eternal damnation, if such a one did not really receive Our Lord? Would it not be absurd to say that a man would incur eternal damnation by merely eating a piece of bread or drinking a few drops of wine? But because the Apostle, taught by Jesus Christ Himself, knew that he who receives Holy Communion receives Our Lord Himself, he declared that to receive it unworthily was to be guilty of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and consequently to deserve Hell-fire.

Moreover, all the Fathers of the Church teach the same doctrine as St. Paul. St. Ignatius, Bishop of Smyrna, who lived in the first century, wrote as follows to the faithful of that city: "Because the heretics refuse to acknowledge that the Holy Eucharist contains the same flesh which suffered for our sins and was raised again to life by God the Father, they die a miserable death and perish without hope."

Tertullian says: "Our flesh is nourished with the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ so that our souls are filled with God Himself." "Who," asks St. John Chrysostom, "will give us of His flesh that we may be filled?" (*Job* 31:31). This Christ has done, allowing Himself not only to be seen, but to be touched too, and to be eaten, so that our teeth pierce His Flesh, and all are filled with His love.

Parents often give their children to others to nurse them: not so do I, says Christ—I nourish you with

My Flesh and place Myself before you. I was willing to become your brother; for your sake I took Flesh and Blood; and *again I deliver to you that Flesh and Blood* by which I became so nearly related to you." (*Homil.* 46). In like manner do all the Fathers of the Church speak that have written upon this subject.

But you will ask: "*How* is Our Lord present in the Holy Eucharist?" I answer: "Jesus Christ is truly, really and substantially contained under the outward appearance of bread and wine, i.e., He is present whole and entire, His Body and Soul, His Flesh and His Blood, His whole humanity and His whole divinity. This is clear from what Our Lord said at the institution of this holy mystery: "This is My Body," that is to say, this which I hold in My hand is the same body of Flesh with which you see Me clothed, the same Body that I have borne for thirty-three years, the very Body that shall be tomorrow nailed to the Cross.

Moreover, as in Him the human nature was inseparably united to the divine, He Himself—His whole humanity and divinity—was contained under that outward appearance of bread. "How is this possible?" you ask. I answer: "By the Almighty power of God." Is it not as easy for Him to change bread into His Body and wine into His Blood as it was for Him to create Heaven and earth out of nothing? It happened once in the Netherlands that two ladies, a Catholic and a Protestant, were disputing on the subject of the Real Presence. The Protestant asserted that the Real Presence was impossible. The Catholic asked her: "Have you Protestants any creed in your religion?" "Oh, to be sure," said the Protestant; and she began to recite: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." "Stop," said the other; "that is enough. You say that you believe in an all-powerful God; why then do you not believe that He can change bread into His Body and wine into His Blood? Is that difficult for Him who is Almighty?" The Protestant had nothing to answer.

A similar argument was once made use of by a pious painter named Leonardo. He one day met in an inn two men, one of whom was a Lutheran and the other a Calvinist. They were ridiculing the Catholic doctrine about the Blessed Sacrament. The Calvinist pretended that by these words, "This is My Body," it was only meant that the bread *signifies* the Body of Christ; the Lutheran, on the other hand, asserted that this was not true, but that they meant that bread and wine, in the moment of their reception, became, by the faith of the recipient, the Body and Blood of Christ. While this dispute was going on, Leonardo took a piece of paper and drew the image of Our Lord Jesus Christ, with Luther on the right hand and Calvin on the left. Under the image of our Saviour, he wrote the words: "This is My Body." Under the figure of Calvin he wrote: "This *signifies* My Body"; and under that of Luther: "This becomes My Body in the moment that you eat it." Then handing the paper to the two disputants, he said: "Which of these three is right, our Saviour, or Calvin, or Luther?" They were struck at the force of the argument, and ceased to scoff at the Catholic doctrine.

Indeed, this objection to the Real Presence is but a proof of the blindness into which men fall when they are led astray by pride and instigated by the devil. The devil has had from the beginning a special hatred for this doctrine. In the early ages of the Church, he incited Simon the Magician and the Manichaeans to deny it, and in later times, he seduced Berengarius to follow their example; but he never succeeded so well as with Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and the other heresiarchs of the sixteenth century.

Luther acknowledges himself that the devil once appeared to him in a visible shape and told him to abolish the Sacrifice of the Mass and to deny the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. And indeed, this is not strange. The devil knows that, according to the promise of Jesus Christ, they who

receive Holy Communion worthily will not fall into his power but will obtain eternal life, and on this account he either tempts men to disbelieve the mystery, or he suggests every sort of pretext to keep them from receiving it. But he himself believes it and trembles. Would to God that all men had so strong a faith! After Our Lord had changed bread into His Body and wine into His Blood, He added the words: "Do this in remembrance of Me."

Now, by these words, He commanded the Apostles and their lawful successors, the Catholic bishops and priests, to consecrate, i.e., to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood. "Do this," He says—that is to say, "do this which I have done; as I have changed bread and wine into My Body and Blood, so do you also in My name change bread and wine into My Body and Blood."

This change takes place in the Sacrifice of the Mass at the Consecration. The moment the priest pronounces the words of the Consecration over the bread and wine, that very instant Jesus Christ is present as truly as He is in Heaven, with His Body and Soul, His humanity and divinity. After Consecration nothing remains of the bread and wine, except the sensible qualities or appearances. If, for instance, the bread is round, its roundness remains after the Consecration; if it is white, its whiteness remains; if it has a certain taste or quality before, that taste or quality continues; and so with the wine; the particular taste, color and every other sensible quality is just the same after the Consecration as it was before it. In a word, whatever is capable of being perceived by the senses remains, but the *substance*, which is perceived by the understanding alone, and not by the senses, is changed.

But you will perhaps ask: "Why does Our Lord hide Himself under the outward appearances of bread and wine? Why does He not manifest Himself under the sensible qualities of His Body, with His wounded hands, His merciful countenance, His radiant majesty?" Now,

Our Lord does so chiefly for two reasons: The first is that we may not lose the merit of faith. Were we to see Jesus Christ as He is seen by the blessed in Heaven, we could no longer make an act of faith in His Real Presence, for "faith is the belief in things which we do not see." (St. Paul).

Now Our Lord wishes to bestow on us after this life a great reward for our faith, as He Himself has said: "Blessed are they that do not see and yet believe." Many of the Saints, in order not to lose the merit of their faith, have gone so far as to beg Our Lord not to favor them with those consoling manifestations of Himself in the Blessed Sacrament which He has sometimes granted to His chosen servants. One day, when St. Louis, King of France, was invited to go to a church in which Our Lord appeared in the Holy Eucharist under the form of an infant, he replied: "I will not go to see my Lord in the Holy Eucharist because I *believe* that He is present there as firmly as if I had seen Him. Let those go and see Him who do not believe."

Surius relates, in the life of St. Hugo, that a priest of a certain village in England, on breaking the Sacred Host one day at Mass, saw blood issuing from it; whereupon, filled with reverential awe, he determined to lead a holier life in the future, and in fact he soon became renowned for his sanctity. St. Hugo happening once to stop at this village, the priest related this miracle to him and offered to show him the cloths which were yet stained with the miraculous blood; but the holy bishop refused to look at them and would not even allow his attendants to do so, saying that such wonders and sensible proofs were only for those who did not believe. And when he noticed that some of his attendants had a desire to see them, he reprimanded them sharply and said that this desire proceeded not from piety but from curiosity and that it was more perfect to believe without seeing, as Our Lord Himself assures us. "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet believe." (*John* 20:29).

The second reason why Our Lord hides Himself is that He might inspire us with confidence. If He were to show Himself in all His glory, as He appears to the Angels and Saints in Heaven, who would dare to approach Him? Surely no one. But Jesus most earnestly desires to unite Himself intimately to our souls, and therefore He conceals Himself under the outward form of bread, that we may not be afraid of Him. "Our great King," says St. Teresa, "veils Himself that we may receive Him with greater confidence."

In order to enliven our faith in His Real Presence, Our Lord has frequently manifested Himself in a sensible manner in the Holy Eucharist. Church history abounds in instances of the kind. The first that I shall relate is that of a miracle which occurred in the church of St. Denis in Douay and is recorded by Thomas Cantipratensis, an eyewitness. A certain priest, after having distributed Holy Communion to the faithful, found one of the Sacred Hosts lying on the floor. Full of consternation he knelt down to take it up, when the Host arose of its own accord and placed itself on the purifier. The priest immediately called those who were present, and when they came near the altar, they all saw in the Sacred Host Jesus Christ under the form of a child of exquisite beauty. "On hearing the news," says our author, "I too went to Douay. After I had declared to the dean the object of my visit, we went together to the church, and no sooner had he opened the ciborium wherein the miraculous Host was contained than we both beheld our Divine Saviour." "I saw," says Thomas, "the head of Jesus Christ, like that of a full grown man. It was crowned with thorns. Two drops of blood trickled down His forehead and fell on His cheek. With tearful eyes I fell prostrate before Him. When I arose again, I no longer saw either the crown of thorns or the drops of blood, but only the face of a man whose aspect inspired great veneration." This miracle gave rise to a confraternity in honor of the Most Holy Eucharist, to which several popes,

especially Paul IV and Clement XIV, granted numerous indulgences. (P. Favre, *Le Ciel Ouvert*).

In the village of *Les Ulmes de St. Florent*, in the diocese of Angers, the following miracle occurred on the second of June, 1666, the Saturday within the octave of the feast of Corpus Christi. The people were assembled in the church for Benediction, and when the priest had intoned the hymn, "*Verbum Caro, panem verum,*" there appeared in place of the Host the distinct figure of a man. He was clothed in white, and His hands were crossed on His breast; His hair fell upon His shoulders, and His countenance was resplendent with majesty. The curate then invited all his parishioners to come and witness the miracle: "If there be any infidel here," said he, "let him now draw near." Everyone approached and gazed upon this beautiful vision for about a quarter of an hour, after which the Host resumed its former shape. The Bishop of Angers, Mgr. Henry Arnaud, after having examined the testimony in favor of this miracle, caused it to be proclaimed throughout the whole of France.

The Blessed Nicholas Fattori, a Franciscan friar, remarkable for his piety and purity of heart, often saw Jesus Christ in the Consecrated Host in the form of an infant. On touching the Blessed Sacrament, he seemed to feel, not the mere Eucharistic species, but the very Flesh of Jesus Christ. On this account, he used to present his fingers to those who wished to kiss his hand, saying: "Kiss these fingers with great respect, for they are sanctified by real contact with Jesus Christ Our Lord and Sovereign Good." It is also related that, when this holy man was in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, he used to rejoice as a child does in the presence of its mother.

Our Lord in His great mercy has even gone so far as to manifest Himself to His enemies, to the unbelievers.

In the life of St. Gregory the Great, written by Paul the deacon, it is related that a noble matron of Rome,

who was accustomed to prepare the hosts for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, went one Sunday to receive Holy Communion from the holy Pontiff. When he gave her the Blessed Eucharist, saying, "May the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life everlasting," she laughed outright. Seeing this, the Sovereign Pontiff did not give her the Blessed Sacrament, but replaced it on the altar, and when the holy mysteries were ended, he asked the lady why she laughed when about to receive the Body of the Lord. "Why," said she, "I laughed because I saw that what you said was the Body of the Lord was one of those very wafers which I had made with my own hands." Upon this the Pope ordered all present to pray that God, in confirmation of the truth, would cause all to see with the eyes of the body what the unbelief of this woman had prevented her from seeing with the eyes of the soul. Accordingly, when the holy Pontiff and all present had prayed for a while, the corporal was removed, and in sight of the multitude who pressed round to witness the miracle, the Holy Host was visibly changed into flesh. Then, turning to the woman, the Pope said: Learn now to believe the words of the *Eternal Truth* who declares: "The bread which I give is My Flesh, and My Blood is drink indeed." And having besought God once more to change the Host into its original form, he gave her the Holy Communion. This woman never again doubted of the Real Presence and soon made great progress in virtue.

I shall adduce only one more instance, which is related by St. Alphonsus in his *History of Heresies*. It occurred about the time in which Wickliffe began to deny the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence. Some Jews procured a Sacred Host through a servant girl whom they had bribed to receive it unworthily. They then carried it to an inn where they cut it into several pieces. Immediately a great quantity of blood issued from each of the particles, but this miracle did not convert those unhappy wretches. They now concealed the

particles in a meadow near the city of Posen. Some time afterwards, a cowherd, on crossing this meadow, saw the small particles of the Host rising into the air and shining like fiery flames; he saw, moreover, that the oxen fell on their knees as if in adoration. The cowherd, who was a Catholic, told his father what he had seen, and the father, having also witnessed the miracle, acquainted the magistrate of the fact. Thereupon a great concourse of people flocked to the place to witness the miracle. In fine, the Bishop, with the clergy of the city, went in procession to the place, and having deposited the holy particles in a ciborium, they carried them to the church. A small chapel was built on the spot where this miracle occurred. This chapel was afterwards enlarged and converted into a magnificent church by Wenceslaus, King of Poland; and Stephen, the Archbishop, testifies to his having seen in this church these bloody particles.

You might be inclined to infer from this narrative that Our Lord's Body is really broken and His Blood really shed whenever the Host is cut or divided, but this is not the case. In the Blessed Sacrament Our Lord's Body remains whole and entire in each particle, as it was in the entire Host. The Fathers of the Church explain this by the comparison of a broken mirror, for just as each part of the mirror reflects the entire image which the whole reflected before it was broken, so also does each particle of the Host contain Christ's Body entire, as the whole Host did before it was broken. And what is true of the Host is true also of the chalice; Our Lord is present under each drop of Blood as truly as under the whole species in the chalice.

Whenever, therefore, the Host is broken or the Blood spilled, it is not Our Lord's Body and Blood that are broken and divided, but only the sacred species. Moreover, Our Lord's Blood, as well as His Body, is present under the form of bread, and His Body, as well as His Blood, is present under the appearance of wine. At His Resurrection, Our Lord's soul was reunited to

His Body and Blood, never again to be separated; so that where His Body is, there also is His Blood, His Soul, and His Divinity; and where His Blood is, there also are His Body, Soul and Divinity. In a word, Christ is entirely present under the species of bread, as well as in the least particle of it, and He is also entirely present under the species of wine, as well as in the least particle of it. On this account, the Church, moved by several weighty reasons, communicates the faithful under the form of bread only, knowing that they are thereby deprived of no part of the Sacrament, but that they receive the Blood of Jesus Christ as truly as if they drank it out of the chalice.

That Our Lord's Blood is contained along with His Body in the Sacred Host is proved, not only by the authority of the Church and the Scriptures, and by the arguments from reason which I have just stated, but also by numerous miracles. Some of those which I have already related prove this doctrine. I will, therefore, add but one more.

It is related in the chronicles of the Hieronimites that a religious of that order, named Peter of Cavanelas, was much tempted by doubts about the presence of Blood in the Sacred Host. It pleased God to deliver him from the temptation in the following manner: One Saturday, as he was saying Mass in honor of Our Blessed Lady, a thick cloud descended upon the altar and enveloped it completely. When the cloud had disappeared, he looked for the Host he had consecrated, but could not find it. The chalice, too, was empty. Full of fear, he prayed to God to assist him in this perplexity; whereupon, he beheld the Host upon a paten in the air. He noticed that Blood was flowing from it into the chalice. The Blood continued to flow until the chalice was as full as it had been before. After his death, this miracle was found recorded in his own handwriting. At the time it happened, nothing was known about it, as Our Lord enjoined secrecy upon him. Even the person who served his Mass knew nothing about it; he

only noticed that the priest shed many tears, and that the Mass lasted longer than usual.

Ah, how mysterious, yet how divine and how consoling is the doctrine of the Real Presence! Indeed, it is one of the most wonderful and most consoling of all doctrines. It is the center of Catholic devotion and has ever been the object of the most rapturous contemplation of the saints. But I have not yet mentioned a fact which, I believe, will increase your appreciation of this mystery. It is, in some respects, more wonderful than any I have yet mentioned, and with it I will conclude my instruction.

There have been many holy persons who have had a supernatural instinct by which they were sensible of the presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, even when it was hidden and at a distance from them; they could also distinguish a consecrated Host from an unconsecrated one. Goerres, in his celebrated work entitled *Christian Mysticism*, notices this fact and thus prefaces the enumeration of the few cases which he cites: "In reference to the holiest of all things, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, we find that those Saints who have succeeded in raising themselves to the higher regions of spiritual life were all endowed with the faculty of detecting the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, even when it was hidden and at a considerable distance. Blessed Ida of Louvain was always sensible of the presence of Our Lord at the precise moment of Consecration. Once, when the server at Mass had by mistake given the priest water instead of wine, so that there was no consecration, St. Coleta, though kneeling at a distance, perceived it by a supernatural instinct.

The Cistercian nun Juliana always knew when the Blessed Sacrament was moved from St. Martin's Church at the close of the service, and each time she used to be overwhelmed with sadness. This was frequently witnessed by her friend Eva. (*Ibid.*) One day the Franciscans of Villonda invited the holy

Carmelite Cassetus to visit them, and in order to try him, they took the Blessed Sacrament out of the tabernacle in which it was usually kept and placed it elsewhere. They put no light before it, but left the lamp burning as usual before the customary altar. On entering the church, the companion of Cassetus turned towards the high altar, but Cassetus immediately pointed out the spot where the Blessed Sacrament had been placed, saying: "The Body of Our Lord is there and not where the lamp is burning; the brothers whom you see behind the grating have placed it there in order to try us." (*Ibid.*)

St. Francis Borgia had the same gift, and on entering a church, he always walked straight to the spot where the Blessed Sacrament was kept, even when no external sign indicated its presence. In 1839, Prince Licknowsky visited Mary Moerl, the celebrated Tyrolese virgin upon whom God bestowed so many miraculous gifts. While she was kneeling in ecstasy on her bed, he observed that she moved round towards the window. Neither he nor any of those present could tell the cause of this. At last, on looking out, they saw a priest passing by, carrying the Viaticum to the sick, without bell or chant or any sound that could give notice of its approach. (*Catholic Magazine*).

In the life of St. Lidwina of Holland, it is recorded that the priest, in order to try her, gave her an unconsecrated host, but the Saint perceived that it was only bread and said: "Your Reverence will please give me another host, for that which you hold in your hand is not Jesus Christ."

Blessed Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, a Carmelite nun who lived in France, was one day suffering great pain. Her sisters, wishing to ascertain whether she would really find relief in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, to which she had a singular devotion, carried her at first to various places in which the Holy Eucharist was *not* kept and exhorted her to pray to Jesus Christ; but she answered in a

plaintive voice: "I do not find my Saviour here," and addressing herself to Him, she said: "My Lord, I do not find here Thy Divine Truth," after which she besought her sisters to carry her into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. (Her life by P. Poesl, C.S.S.R.).

When St. Louis, King of France, was on his death-bed, he was asked by the priest who brought him the Viaticum whether he really believed that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was present in the Host. The Saint, collecting all his strength, answered with a loud voice: "I believe it as firmly as if I saw Him present in the Host, just as the Apostles saw Him when He ascended gloriously into Heaven." Now, if you would have such faith as this great Saint, make use of the following means: First, make many acts of faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Make them at home; kneel down in your room; turn toward some church in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept and say: "My Jesus, I firmly believe that Thou art present in that church; I sincerely wish to be with Thee; but since this is impossible, I beseech Thee to give Thy blessing to me and to all men."

Make such acts of faith when you are abroad or when you are at your work; turn from time to time towards the Blessed Sacrament and say: "My amiable Saviour, bless me and everything that I do; I will do and suffer everything for love of Thee." Make such acts of faith on your way to church. Say to yourself: "I am going to visit the King of Heaven and earth; I am going to see my good Jesus, my amiable Saviour, who died on the Cross for me, a wretched sinner; I am going to visit the best of fathers, who even considers it a favor when I have recourse to Him in my necessities."

Finally, excite your faith when you are in church. Kneel with profound reverence and adore your God and Creator, saying: "My God, I firmly believe that Thou art in this tabernacle. I believe that in the Blessed Sacrament the same God is present who created Heaven

and earth out of nothing; the same God who became an infant for my sake; who, after His death and Resurrection, ascended into Heaven, and now sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; the same who, at the end of the world, will come in great majesty to judge the living and the dead.”

This, then, is the first rule—to make many acts of faith. The second is to keep yourself free from sin; for God will not bestow the gift of a lively faith on a soul that is dead in sin. The third and most efficacious means to gain a strong faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is to pray for it. “He that asketh receiveth.” Hence, if you wish to have a lively faith in this mystery, a faith that will make you exult when in the presence of the Holy Eucharist, or even when you think of it, ask it of Jesus Christ, and be assured that you will receive it. But since this lively faith is a gift of inestimable value, Jesus Christ wishes that we should ask for it again and again without ceasing. Pray for it therefore until you have obtained it, and when you have obtained this great gift, continue to pray that it may never be taken from you. Make this prayer especially during Mass. Hear Mass frequently and, especially in the time between the Consecration and the Communion, beseech Jesus Christ to grant your petition, and doubt not in the least that you will obtain it.

A young cleric once heard a missionary preach on the Real Presence, and on the great love of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. The preacher spoke with as lively a faith as if he saw Jesus Christ with his eyes. The young man was struck at this, and said to himself: “Oh my Lord! What shall become of me? I, too, must one day preach on Thy presence in the Holy Eucharist; but how feeble will my words be in comparison with the words of this pious priest!” The young man related this afterwards, and he added that, from that time forward, he had always begged of Jesus Christ the gift of a lively faith in the Real Presence

and that he had done so frequently during Mass, particularly at the time of the elevation. By this means his faith became so strong that he afterwards besought Our Lord *not* to appear to him in any sensible manner, and he could find nowhere so much joy and contentment of heart as in a church where the Blessed Sacrament was preserved.

Often call to mind the wonders which Jesus Christ has wrought in this mystery of love; make many acts of faith in His Real Presence; lead a very chaste life; often beseech Jesus Christ to give you a lively faith, especially when you have received Holy Communion; and then rest assured that your faith will become strong and lively, like the faith of a Saint, and your happiness will be unbounded. In days of yore, God complained that the Jews did not know Him: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel hath not known Me, and My people hath not understood." And when our Divine Saviour came on earth, He repeated the same reproach. When Philip said to Our Lord at the Last Supper: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us," our Saviour reproached him, saying: "Have I been so long with you and you have not known Me? Philip, he that seeth Me, seeth the Father also."

In the same manner does our dear Saviour, hidden under the Sacramental veils, seem to reproach us: "I, your God and Redeemer, have been so long with you in the Blessed Sacrament, and yet you do not know Me? Do you not know that when you see the Blessed Sacrament, you see Me, your Jesus? Do you not know that, when you are in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, you are in *My* Divine Presence?" Alas, this reproach is but too just! How true are the words of the Evangelist: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." May you, my dear Reader, never deserve this reproach, but rather, may you be of the number of those of whom

the same Evangelist says: "But as many as received Him (that is, with a lively faith), to them He hath given power to be made the sons of God." May you live on earth as a child of God, and after death may you be received into the kingdom of your heavenly Father, where, in reward for your faith, you will see, face to face, Him whom you have adored in the Blessed Sacrament and will hear from His lips the consoling words: "Come, My well-beloved, blessed art thou, because though thou hast not seen, thou hast yet believed."