The 1.285 billion Catholic Church’s official doctrine is that every Mass is a ritual “re-enactment” or “perpetuation” of Our Lord’s one bloody sacrifice on Calvary.

**Quintessentially Catholic**

In 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, Paul says: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation [or communion] in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation [or communion] in the body of Christ? For, there is the one bread and, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread”.

Perhaps, no other liturgical feast is more “Catholic” than Corpus Christi! Why is this feast so “Catholic?” It is one of the ten Holy Days of Obligation in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church, in some countries, including the United States, where it is celebrated on the Sunday following Trinity Sunday. The French call it the “Festival of God”! However, the other Christian faith persuasions, especially, almost all Protestants, totally disagree with the “Transubstantiation and Real Presence” belief of the Church of Rome.

**Transubstantiation and Real Presence**

The “breadness” and “wineness,” so to speak, are changed into the living Jesus, true God and
true man, whole God and whole man; not symbolically or metaphorically! “The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: ‘...by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread, into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation’” (CCC, 1376).

Jesus was speaking about the living flesh of his resurrected body, which would be raised to “life” by the power of “the Spirit” and then, taken up to heaven at the Ascension. This is why the “new manna” is miraculous in the Eucharist, in which Jesus will give his crucified and risen body and blood. For, after his Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, his body would no longer be bound by space and time. The “Bread of Life” sermon asserts the intimate connection between the Eucharist and the bodily resurrection: “Amen, amen I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink” (Jn.6: 53-54).

When Jesus said, my words are “Spirit and life” (Jn.6:63), he was not speaking symbolically. In Greek the word pneuma (spirit) does not imply any symbolism. In both, the Old and New Testaments, the Spirit is real, more real than anything in the visible, material world. Jesus’ disciples, however, did not understand the supernatural nature of the new manna from heaven.

They couldn’t comprehend he wished to give them his resurrected (spirit) body and blood, miraculously present under the veil of bread and wine. Therefore, if the disciples wished to share in the “life” of Jesus’ bodily resurrection, then, they had to partake of both, his body and blood. If Jesus saw the Eucharist as the Rabbinic “bread of the world to come,” then he would certainly have seen it as the bread and blood “of a new heaven and a new earth (cf. Isa. 64-65). It was a foretaste and pledge of the new creation. This is what Jesus said in the
Bread of Life Discourse: “Whoever eats the new manna of the Eucharist will be raised up “on the last day” (Jn.6:54).

Jesus’ truth claim was his person (John 14:6), his presence (John 6:35), and his ability to participate in God’s perfect love (John 17:21-22). Jesus gives us his risen presence as “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). No dogma can ever be a substitute for that.

If we are to understand the mysterious Bread of the Presence, it will help us solve the Eucharistic puzzle. Jesus not only saw the Last Supper as the new Passover, and the new manna from heaven; he also saw it as the messianic fulfilment of the Bread of Presence. In Exodus 25:23-24, 29-30 God says, “You shall set the Bread of the Presence on the altar before me always.” The Bread of the Presence in Hebrew is lehem ha panim. The Hebrew word for “face” is panim, the “Bread of the Face” of God. Exodus 24:9-11 says, “They beheld God and ate and drank.”

However, it is strikingly amazing that on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24), “the disciples’ eyes were kept from recognizing him.” In his resurrected body, Jesus was able to appear to them in his spirit body, his risen self: no longer bound by space, time or appearance. Jesus appeared to his disciples after the resurrection in the shape and form of a man, but under the veil of the Eucharist. This explains the real presence of the body and blood of Jesus which we mystically “eat and drink”, transubstantiated, at the Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Mass.

This kind of presence corresponds to the virtue of faith, for the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ cannot be detected or discerned by any way other than faith.

Corpus Christi celebrates the Transubstantiation and Real Presence of Jesus, while making sacred space and lending heavenly grace, for the adorableness of the Eucharist - the centerpiece of Catholicism! Oh! What august and awesome, mysticism and mystery! It’s time we bask in the warmth of God’s provision.
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