

his description of the ceremony of Holy Mass would describe High Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral any Sunday of the year. I give that part that concerns the Real Presence.

"And this food is called by us the Eucharist, of which no one else may have a share except he who believes that our teaching is true, and has been cleansed by the washing for the forgiveness of sins and regeneration, and so lives as Christ taught. For we do not receive these things as common bread or common drink; but as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by a word of God, had flesh and blood for our salvation, so we have learned that the food, made a Eucharist by a word of prayer that comes from Him, . . . by change is the Flesh and Blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the Apostles in the commentaries made by them, which are called Gospels, have handed down that it was taught to them so." (c. 66).

"And after the presiding priest has made the Eucharist, and all the people have cried out (amen), those who are called by us deacons give to each one present a share of the Eucharist bread and wine and water, and carry them to those not present." (c. 65).

These passages, though long and a bit involved, clearly presuppose an identity, miraculously produced by Christ, between the consecrated elements and Christ's own flesh and blood.

A no less important witness to the Real Presence is St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons in the latter part of the second century. Like St. Justin, he too has many allusions to the liturgy of Holy Mass. He refers to the Scripture lessons read, to the offertory of bread and wine, to the consecration by the words of institution, to the Eucharist being sent to some of those who are absent, to hymns, and to the bishop's sermon.

He argues that the Gnostics from the generally-admitted doctrine of the Eucharist. If, as the heretics said, Jesus is not the Son of the Creator of the world, and so has no power over the elements of created nature, "how can they believe that this bread, over which the Eucharistic prayer has been said, is the Body of their Lord, and that the chalice contains His Blood?" (Adv. Hereses L iv: c. 18: p. 4).

Again, since the Gnostics denied the resurrection of the body Irenaeus affirms that in receiving the Eucharist, we receive that which will give everlasting life even to our bodies:

"How can they assert that our flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His Blood, becomes corrupted, and does not partake of life?" (ibid.).

In another passage of the same work (v. 2, 2-3). Irenaeus says that Christ declared the chalice to be His own blood, and the bread His own body, and that our flesh is nourished by the body and blood of the Lord. If the Gnostics are right, then, says Irenaeus: "The Eucharistic chalice is not His blood; nor the bread which we break, the communion of His body. For blood can only come from veins and flesh, and whatever else makes up the substance of man, such as the Word of God, was actually made." (v. 2.2.)

From Tertullian, the great African apologist of the same period, we have testimony to the Real Presence equally unequivocal. He makes bold to write that—

"The flesh [of man] feeds on the body and blood of Christ." (de Resurre, Carnis 8.)

In another passage he writes of some Christians who, though engaged in the unlawful trade of manufacturing idols, yet presume to approach the Holy Communion.

"It is a deplorable outrage for a Christian to come away from idols into the Church. . . . to apply to the Lord's Body those same hands which construct bodies for the demons. . . . O wickedness! The Jews laid hands on Christ once; these mangle His body daily. Such hands as these should be cut off." (De Idolol. 7.)

Again he says:

"We reverently take care lest any particle of our bread or wine should fall to the ground." (De Cor. Militis 3.)

The great Alexandrian writers of the latter second and early third centuries—Clement and Origen, are equally explicit in many passages of their writings. Both writers in innumerable places testify to the ordinary and universal belief of the Church that the Lord offers us, in the Eucharist, His body to eat and His blood to drink, and that this nourishment ensures immortality. Clement in various places describes the divine Liturgy of the Mass; he speaks of the Eucharist as "a praiseworthy and glorious gift of grace by which those who partake of it with faith are sanctified both in body and soul." (Paed. ii., 2.)

"He [Christ] pours into our wounded souls wine, the blood of David's vine." (Quis dives c. 29.)

"The Word of God is all things to the child, both father and mother and pedagogue and nourisher. 'Eat My flesh,' He saith, and 'drink My blood.' The Lord supplies us with these befitting foods, and gives flesh and pours forth blood; and nothing is wanting for the child's growth. Oh, incredible mystery! He orders us to put aside the old carnal corruption, as well as the old food: but being made partakers of the other new food of Christ, receiving Him, if possible, to place Him within ourselves, and to have the Saviour in our breasts, in order that we may reduce to their proper place the affections of our flesh." (Paed. 1. 6.)

Origen, the great Alexandrian scholar of the early third century, is equally emphatic on the doctrine of the Real Presence. In one of his sermons exhorting people to hear God's Word, he writes:

"You who have been accustomed to be present at the divine mysteries know that when you receive the body of the Lord, you take care with all caution and veneration, lest any part thereof, however small, should fall, lest any portion of the consecrated gift be lost. For, if any part of it should fall through your negligence, you think yourself guilty; and you think rightly. If then you use so much caution, and rightly so, as regards the preserving the body, is it a lesser sin to have neglected the Word of God than the body of God?"

Writing against Celsus (n. 33, Book viii.) he writes:

"Let Celsus, being ignorant of God, offer Eucharistic gifts to demons. But we, giving thanks to the Maker of the universe, do also eat the loaves that have been offered with thanksgiving and prayer made over them. Then these gifts become a certain holy body which makes holy those who use it well."

There was no need for the apologist to say whose body it was. It is enough that in the Eucharist the bread "becomes" the Body.

The Eucharistic doctrine of Cyprian, the Carthaginian Bishop of the middle of the third century, is so abundant and clear as to embarrass one who wishes to cite it. Again and again he affirms that the body and blood of Christ are present in the Eucharist, and that the Eucharist is the Sacrifice of the Lord's Passion. A few phrases must suffice. To give the Eucharist to unrepentant apostates is, he says, "to profane the holy body of the Lord." (Epist. ix.) Again, writing to Pope Cornelius, epistle L. iv., he says that the faithful must be prepared and strengthened for the coming trials of martyrdom. They must be fortified with "the protection of the body and blood of Christ.

"And since the Eucharist is ordained for this, to be a safeguard for those who receive it, let us arm those who we wish to be safe against the enemy, with the defence of the fulness of the Lord. How can we teach or urge the people to shed their blood for the Name, if on the eve of combat we refuse them the blood of Christ?"

In his treatise on the Lord's Prayer, he says that we Christians come in contact with the Lord's body, and therefore in perfect truth we may call Him "

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