

**Teaching True Presence:  
Standing on Solid Ground**

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As Catholics we profess belief in the Triune God. We sign ourselves, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The eternal God is living and present to us. “The Bible speaks of God’s manifestation of himself first to creation, then to the history of a people, and finally to a human being.”<sup>1</sup> The visible assurance that we are cared for and guided by God has been perfected in the presence of Jesus Christ. God continues to be made known to us through the sacraments of the Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us “the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life”<sup>2</sup> as proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council. Our faith teaches the Eucharist is Christ’s body and blood. How does one understand his true presence?

A Gallup poll taken in 1992 showed almost 70 percent of Catholics were confused in their beliefs about Christ’s Eucharistic presence. Thirty percent of the people questioned believed they were receiving the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus under the appearance of bread and wine, while the rest believed the life of Jesus is either symbolized or co-present in these gifts, or that Jesus’ true presence depended on their personal belief. Another poll taken by CBS and The New York Times of Mass-attending Catholics revealed that only one in six young adults, ages 18-29, believe in the real presence doctrine of the Church.<sup>3</sup>

The Synoptic gospels written between 65 and 85 AD give an account of the Last Supper. Matthew and Mark identify the bread and wine with the words of Jesus, “Take it, this is my body ... This is my blood of the covenant...” (Mt. 26:26-28, Mk. 14:22-24) Luke’s gospel is perhaps less apparent to some where Jesus says the bread that is blessed, broken and given to them as his body, which will be given, and “the cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for

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<sup>1</sup>Sofia Cavalletti, *History’s Golden Thread* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999), 9.

<sup>2</sup>*Catechism of the Catholic Church: Revised in Accordance with the Official Latin Text Promulgated by Pope John Paul II*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), n. 1324.

<sup>3</sup>Fr. Frank Chacon and Jim Burnham, *Beginning Apologetics 3: How to Explain and Defend the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist* (Farmington, NM: San Juan Catholic Seminars, 2000), 4.

you.” (Lk. 22:19-20)<sup>4</sup> “Did the Apostles who took part in the Last Supper understand the meaning of the words spoken by Christ? Perhaps not. Those words would only be fully clear at the end of the *Triduum sacrum*.”<sup>5</sup>

John’s gospel beginning at chapter 13 tells of a meal only in the giving of a morsel to Judas while reclining at table with his disciples. Before the meal there is a focus on Jesus washing the feet of his chosen ones, and afterwards he teaches those who have remained with him. The eucharistic understanding is in chapter 6, when Jesus proclaimed to the people at the synagogue in Capernaum “I am the bread of life.” (Jn 6:48) Jesus is telling us what he does, that he nourishes with bread that produces life. He continued,

“Amen, amen I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.” (Jn 6:53-55)<sup>6</sup>

Jesus is speaking about the food of eternal life; this revelation from God that will take place in the broken body and spilled blood of his crucifixion. Only the physical body of a human being produces flesh and blood. The incarnate life and very real death of Christ is this life-giving food. This food is for the life of the world. Jesus desires all people to be nourished by the gift of himself in a real experience of eating.<sup>7</sup>

The first century Christian readers of the Johannine gospel and many throughout the centuries have asked, “Where do we encounter this revelation of God in the flesh and blood of the Son of Man?”<sup>8</sup> One encounters God in the Eucharistic celebration. The CCC reads: “At the heart of the

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<sup>4</sup>Joseph Martos, *Doors to the Sacred* (Liguori MO: Liguori Publications, 2001), 216.

<sup>5</sup>John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* [Encyclical Letter, 2003], accessed 3/30/09; available from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_17042003\\_ecclesia-de-eucharistia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_17042003_ecclesia-de-eucharistia_en.html), n 2.

<sup>6</sup>NAB: The Catholic Study Bible.

<sup>7</sup>Francis J. Moloney, “The Gospel of John,” In *Sacra Pagina 4* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 214, 221-223.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 223.

Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's Body and Blood."<sup>9</sup> John's gospel 6:60-66 tells how this announcement is divisive among his followers resulting in many of them leaving Jesus. "Do you also want to leave?" he asked the Twelve but he also asks it of us.

"The Eucharist and the Cross are stumbling blocks. It is the same mystery and it never ceases to be an occasion of division... The Lord's question echoes through the ages, as a loving invitation to discover that only he has 'the words of eternal life' and that to receive in faith the gift of his Eucharist is to receive the Lord himself."<sup>10</sup>

Scholars and Christians are divided on what to believe about the Eucharist or what the early Church understood. Acts 2:20 reads, "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles, and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers." Pope John Paul II tells us, "This is already clear from the earliest images of the Church... the breaking of the bread refers to the Eucharist."<sup>11</sup> St. Paul witnesses to his experience of Christ in the Eucharist. "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" (1Cor 10:16) Can symbolic bread and wine unite us to Christ? "Unity with Jesus by the community is Paul's urgent call, since Jesus in the Eucharist wants to be united to the community."<sup>12</sup>

Dr. Scott Hahn tells us the early Church took Christ at his word. In 107, St. Ignatius in his Epistle to the Smyrneans said, "it was a mark of true faith to confess the Eucharist 'to be the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ,'" and 50 years later St. Justin Martyr wrote, "the food blessed by the prayer of His word... is the flesh and blood of Jesus who was made flesh."<sup>13</sup> Hahn points out

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<sup>9</sup>CCC, n. 1333.

<sup>10</sup>CCC, n. 1336.

<sup>11</sup>*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 3.

<sup>12</sup>Kenan B. Osborne, *Community, Eucharist, and Spirituality* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 2007), 12.

<sup>13</sup>Scott Hahn, *Scripture Matters: Essays on Reading the Bible from the Heart of the Church* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2003), 124.

that the Church Fathers: Irenaeus of Lyons, Hippolytus of Rome, Tertullian of Carthage, Clement of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom of Antioch and Theodore of Mopsuestia spoke of real presence with one voice. In this first millennium the doctrine was not significantly challenged. Pope Benedict XVI quotes St. Augustine, who in asking himself what it is that can move us most deeply, said: "What does our soul desire more passionately than truth?" Each of us has an innate and irrepressible desire for ultimate and definitive truth. The Lord Jesus, "the way, and the truth, and the life" (*Jn* 14:6)<sup>14</sup>

Worship and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament outside of Mass developed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century as a Western Christian reaction to the heresy of Berengar of Tours who claimed Christ's presence was only symbolic in the Eucharist. This devotion has been a source of great spiritual energy to the many saints since that time. "Eucharistic contemplation is the gift of establishing a heart-to-heart contact with Jesus really present in the Host and, through him, of raising oneself to the Father in the Holy Spirit."<sup>15</sup>

"There is a particular need to cultivate a lively awareness of Christ's real presence, both in the celebration of Mass and in the worship of the Eucharist outside Mass."<sup>16</sup>

"The principal ways by which Christ is present in the Church are gradually revealed in the Mass. He is present firstly in the assembly of the faithful, gathered in his name; he is present in his word, which is read in the Church and commented upon in the Homily; he is present in the minister; he is present finally, and above all else, in the Eucharistic species – a totally unique presence because in the sacrament of the Eucharist, Christ is wholly and entirely present, God and man, substantially and without interruption. It is precisely for this reason that the presence of Christ in the sacred species is called real: 'This presence is called

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<sup>14</sup> Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* [Apostolic Exhortation, 2007], accessed 4/14/09; available from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_exh\\_20070222\\_sacramentum-caritatis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis_en.html), n. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Raniero Cantalamessa, *The Eucharist: Our Sanctification* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 61.

<sup>16</sup> John Paul II, *Mane Nobiscum Domine* [Apostolic Letter, 2004], accessed 4/8/09; available from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_20041008\\_mane-nobiscum-domine\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20041008_mane-nobiscum-domine_en.html), n. 18.

“real” not to exclude the idea that the others are “real” too, but rather to indicate presence par excellence.”<sup>17</sup>

These popes of the Vatican II era are trying to help us understand what true presence is. The term “substantial” has been used since the Scholastic theologians of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and the Council of Trent in the 16<sup>th</sup> century to explain that Jesus’ presence in the Eucharist is not just a spiritual presence, or a symbolic presence, or a reminder of him.<sup>18</sup> Yet the words true, real and substantial are very abstract. Not even the Catechism calls his presence “physical” which to me is a concrete word and defined further as “bodily, real and pure.”<sup>19</sup> Perhaps it is better to speak of Christ’s presence as intimate.

“Only when we begin to understand the eucharist as a time when Jesus is not distant, but close; not aloof, but very intimate; not above us, but profoundly near us; not judging us, but compassionate toward us, will we truly be able to relate this teaching of the church to our faith and devotion.”<sup>20</sup>

Have we forgotten how to be like little children? When teaching true presence to the youngest children one simply states truth and they absorb it into themselves; their minds need what is essential as they cannot abstract nor do they have a concept of time. For them what are important are light, relationship, growth and mystery. Jesus is the essential point of our faith as we are Christocentric. Whether after the consecration at Mass or before the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle, simply give him a name: “That is Jesus!” I did this with my children even as infants.

My work with children is in *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, an approach to the religious formation of children, ages 3-12. It is rooted in the Bible, the liturgy of the Church, and the educational principles of Dr. Maria Montessori. In 1954 in Rome, Dr. Sofia Cavalletti, a

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<sup>17</sup>Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei* [Encyclical Letter, 1965], accessed 4/9/09; available from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_03091965\\_mysterium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_03091965_mysterium_en.html), n. 39.

<sup>18</sup>Kenan B. Osborne, *Sacramental Guidelines: A Companion to the New Catechism for Religious Educators* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995), 74-75.

<sup>19</sup>Microsoft Word 2007, *Thesaurus: English*, accessed 4/13/09.

<sup>20</sup>Osborne, *Sacramental Guidelines*, 80.

Hebrew scholar and Gianna Gobbi, a collaborator and Montessorian, saw in children a way of being in the presence of God that is both unique to the child and a gift to the adult catechist who observes them. Children gather in an "atrium," a room prepared for them, which contains simple yet beautiful materials. A little child, too young to read, can ponder a biblical passage or a prayer from the liturgy by taking the material for that text and work with it. Children demonstrate that they have great religious potential. Sofia and Gianna remind us constantly to look to the child to watch for that sign of a deeply religious life, joy.<sup>21</sup>

Working in the atrium with three-year-olds we begin with Jesus and the prophecies that foretell his birth. The first prophecy to be proclaimed is the Light, Isaiah 9:1. We identify that a prophet's job was to listen for God and to tell the people what he said. God said he would send a person to show the people the way out of darkness and he does that with Jesus. In a darkened room we will light a candle for them to experience what God's word says. We read the Scripture as written in the Bible used at Church and at home, for consistency. Our prayer together might be, "Thank you God for Jesus, our light." With a verbal child I might ask, "Who is the light?" or "Who's words are these?" This older child delights in this God who keeps his promises.

Next the focus is on the infancy narratives in Luke on the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38) and the Birth of Jesus and the Adoration of the Shepherds (Lk 2:1-20). Jesus is placed in history in the land of Israel. God sends the angel to announce the good news; Jesus comes into the world by the power of the Holy Spirit, small, just as they began within their own mothers. A baby placed in a feeding trough and adored by shepherds who were the lowliest of all the people yet God chose them to see him first and they share this divine revelation with others in Bethlehem. The shepherds praise God for this gift as do the children.

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<sup>21</sup>Catechesis of the Good Shepherd website, accessed 4/7/09; available from <http://www.cgsusa.org>.

There is great joy for the child in this mystery of Jesus, who comes for all people yet specifically for them. There are simple clay figures and wooden dioramas shown by the catechist during the proclamation of the Word for the child to internalize these mysteries any time within the atrium; this is their work. Sometimes their work is a scribbled drawing as they ponder what the Holy Spirit is teaching them. As logical, reasoning adults perhaps we should be asking what Mary asked, “How can this be...?” God who is all-powerful comes into the world to be with us in such humility, as a child who needs to be cared for and protected. We need to contemplate this mystery. “To contemplate is to intuitively fix the mind on the divine reality...and relish his presence.”<sup>22</sup>

Another Scripture that is deeply satisfying to the small child is the Parable of the Good Shepherd in John 10:2-16. The parables help us to learn something about God or his kingdom and in this parable Jesus tells us who he is. The child hears “...I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep...I will lay down my life for the sheep...”<sup>23</sup> All these Scriptures are foundational for the teaching of true presence while the focus remains on God’s love.

Another work shown to the children is a miniature altar work. The aim is to name specifically the altar, altar cloth, chalice, paten, crucifix and candles that they will see at Church. Our direct aim is to educate the children to the signs of our faith as well as the gestures—movements that have meaning. There are works for the child to become familiar with the Mass gestures of preparation of the chalice, epiclesis and offering (hands-on works with water, wine, glass cruets, a chalice, and a paten) while small booklets are read to hear the words prayed by the priest during the Mass. Each of these moments is isolated for the child to ponder what this might be.

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<sup>22</sup>Cantalamesa, 61.

<sup>23</sup>Note: the morality is omitted from the Scripture reading until the child reaches the age of reason, 7-8 years of age.

The simple sign of wine being poured into the chalice is to remind us of Jesus, the sign of water poured is to remind us of us, united together with him. They enter into this mystery of Christ. When asked what the gifts of bread and wine become at Mass, they are able to respond Jesus. They give thanks to God the Father for this great gift of the Son through the Holy Spirit.

The catechist also presents the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples in Jerusalem. The children are told that the men are in the Cenacle to celebrate the Feast of Passover, but this time Jesus will say a prayer that had never been said before: “Take it, this is my body; This is my blood of the covenant” within the Scripture reading in Mark 14:22-26. Once proclaimed, the clay figures are moved out of the Cenacle diorama to simulate their movement to the Mount of Olives. The smallest children are told that later that night Jesus is arrested and taken away (the figure of Jesus is placed out of sight), the next day he dies (a small crucifix is placed on the table with the clay chalice, paten and bread), yet he doesn’t stay dead, he rises on the third day (2 candles are placed and lit on the table). Jesus is alive. Jesus gives us the gift of his whole self. The children take in this mystery of Jesus as Eucharist, the power of his words to change simple bread and wine into the gift of himself, his true presence.

In the atrium we speak of Jesus’ Eucharistic presence in an extended work with the good shepherd. Usually around the age of 5, the child identifies his or her self as a sheep, whom Jesus calls by name, whose voice they recognize and follow. The physical material is a small round, gated sheepfold with a wooden good shepherd figure and 10 white sheep. Beside it is now laid another round field that is green which has a small wooden altar and cloth placed upon it, a chalice, a paten and a smaller good shepherd figure. The children are asked what this place might be and most will respond “Church.”

They hear that the good shepherd calls his sheep to be with him at Mass, and they are asked where Jesus is. With the response indicating the Eucharist, the wooden image of Jesus is removed and their understanding is confirmed by the catechist, that Jesus is present on the altar at Mass, though he looks like bread and wine. How humble! The children will move the sheep around the altar then replace them one by one with wooden figures of people, with one as a priest, who is like all the other sheep but has a special work in repeating Jesus' words from the Last Supper. This lesson continues their appreciation of Christ's real presence.

For the older children in the atrium these words are expanded. In the Diocese of Phoenix third graders are prepared for the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. We hear more parables, the True Vine (Jn 15:1-11) and the Wedding Feast (Mt 22:1-14) in preparation to come to the altar to receive Christ as Holy Communion. We meditate on the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and the Bread of Life discourse (Jn 6:1-14, and 30-58), in addition to the healing of the centurion's servant (Mt 8:5-13). We do a study on the history of bread with its beginning from a single wheat seed planted, through the work of human hands becomes bread, and how God transforms it into the Bread of Eternal Life. We invite them and their parents to unwrap this mystagogy throughout their entire lives.

With the children in the atrium and in my personal life, in addition to the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation, I focus on Adoration, prayer and contemplation because I have experienced God in them. To be in relationship with another, one has to spend time with the other, to be present as the other is present whether physically present or just mentally present. Oftentimes during Adoration I am like Mary of Bethany, seated by the Lord "listening to him speak." (Lk 10:39)

God is present throughout human history. Not all believe what has been revealed and given through Jesus Christ. When we pray “Amen” during the Holy Mass it is to say “I do believe.” St. Paul in his First Letter to Timothy in Ephesus warns against false doctrine and admits that he acted out of ignorance in his unbelief, yet “Indeed the grace of our Lord has been abundant, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.” (1Tim 1:14) We too can ask for God’s help in our unbelief, like the father of the boy with a demon in Mark’s gospel who asks Jesus to do anything if he can: Jesus said to him, “If you can! Everything is possible to one who has faith.” Then the boy’s father cried out, “I do believe, help my unbelief!” (Mk 9:23-24)

As a Catholic who stands on the solid ground of Church teaching I invite you to experience this mystery of God. Mystery is something that we enter into and can experience though we do not fully understand. Let the theologians try to come up with words to describe how this can be, that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus at the Holy Mass. This is the doctrine of our Church that can never be fully explained or understood with human reason, it requires faith. “It is a spiritual contact made concrete in word and sign through the sacraments...the Eucharist is this person-to-person contact with Christ’s humanity through touch.”<sup>24</sup> Jesus can be experienced by each one of us who have an open heart and mind to his reality.

“The celebration of every eucharist is a challenge to believe. We have no rational, logical explanation on how Jesus is present. Rather, in faith we say: ‘Jesus is really present to me. Jesus is really present to us.’ A Christian, therefore, does not simply “attend” a eucharist but participates in the mystery of the eucharist, and this participation required faith.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>James T. O’Connor, *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 278.

<sup>25</sup>Cantalamesa, 81.

“The Eucharist is the last step in the long path of God’s ‘condescension’: creation, revelation, incarnation, Eucharist.”<sup>26</sup> Like the Easter mystery and the Incarnation, the Eucharist “is the memorial of a happening – passion and resurrection – but it is also the presence of a person: the incarnate Word.”<sup>27</sup>

Each believer is free to accept or refuse this gift of Eucharist, God’s true presence. “It is the glorified Christ who comes in the Eucharist, for communion with those who are worthy to receive the gift.”<sup>28</sup> The Eucharist is the place where one comes to eternal life. Hahn quotes Joseph Ratzinger, “Every Eucharist is Parousia, the Lord’s coming, and yet the Eucharist is even more truly the tensed yearning that He would reveal His hidden Glory.”<sup>29</sup> The Church we know today is the kingdom of God at hand, “where the King reigns in the Eucharist.”<sup>30</sup> “The Church knows that the Lord comes even now in his Eucharist and that he is there in our midst. However, his presence is veiled.”<sup>31</sup>

“In the sacrament of the Eucharist, Jesus shows us in particular the truth about the love which is the very essence of God. It is this evangelical truth which challenges each of us and our whole being.”<sup>32</sup> As a young child I had an experience of Christ in the Eucharist that many today try to dismiss as not real, or as a happy family memory. Yet I intensely recall this experience 40 years later in my heart with great clarity.

For many years in my adult life I stopped experiencing God as present to me until I moved to the Arizona desert. Coming from Boston, watching the way this community worshipped, using

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 79.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Hahn, 135.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>31</sup>CCC, n. 1404.

<sup>32</sup>Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* [Apostolic Exhortation, 2007], accessed 4/14/09; available from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_exh\\_20070222\\_sacramentum-caritatis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis_en.html), n. 2.

their bodies and not just their words, was foreign and weird to me. Going to Mass wasn't just something they had to do, but something they wanted to do. This was the answer to my prayer: "Take me to a place where people truly live this Catholic faith, because I cannot do it alone."

There was real joy here and that comes only from an experience of lived faith in a community. I realized I couldn't share with my children what I didn't have, I needed to experience God's love for me deeply so that I could acknowledge and support their encounters with the living God.

Let the Eucharistic liturgy be "a way of celebrating the presence of one who has promised to return."<sup>33</sup> Father Jack reminded us on Holy Thursday to come to the Mass in full, conscious and active participation. Become this living body of Christ: participate in the sacraments, especially Reconciliation and the Eucharist; begin weekly Adoration; join a Catholic Bible study group or meditate on the daily Mass readings; read books on our faith or the lives of the saints; take adult formation classes offered; go on-line and read the Vatican II documents and the writings of the Popes; learn about the Mass; and pray with your family often, even the Rosary. Get involved in one of the many parish ministries to serve others in need, just as Christ serves us. Find times of silence, be aware of God, be open to him, and seek God in all things so you too can speak of your experiences of his true presence.

Pope Benedict XVI said:

"...The Holy Eucharist is the gift that Jesus Christ makes of himself, thus revealing to us God's infinite love for every man and woman. This wondrous sacrament makes manifest that "greater" love which led him to "lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13)...Jesus continues, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, to love us "to the end," even to offering us his body and his blood. What amazement must the Apostles have felt in witnessing what the Lord did and said during that Supper! What wonder must the eucharistic mystery also awaken in our own hearts!"<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Jaroslav Pelikan, "The Christian Tradition," in *Scripture Matters*, Scott Hahn, 129.

<sup>34</sup>*Sacramentum Caritatis*, nn.1-2.

“For what great nation is there that has gods so close to it as the Lord, our God, is to us whenever we call upon him?” (Dt 4:7) Like St. Thomas Aquinas we too need to reflect on these words of the Old Testament. “God is not a great unknown...we know where we can find him, where he allows himself to be found and is waiting for us.”<sup>35</sup> “Whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.” (1Cor 6:17) St. Paul is writing that the real presence of Jesus Christ “is not something at rest but is a power that catches us up and works to draw us within itself.”<sup>36</sup> By freeing ourselves from our own self, and uniting ourselves with Christ in Communion we open ourselves to his greatness and discover human fellowship.<sup>37</sup>

This Easter be awakened, Christ is risen, his true presence remains with us. Alleluia.

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<sup>35</sup>Joseph Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us: The Eucharist, The Heart of Life* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 102-103.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 81-82.

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