

Body and Blood C - 2022  
By Phil Bloom

In Dr. Curran book "The Mass: Four Encounters with Jesus That Will Change Your Life," he describes four "presences" of Jesus:

1. in the community,
2. the Word,
3. the priest and
4. the Eucharist.

Each presence of Jesus is vital, but today we will focus on that fourth presence: Jesus in the Eucharist.

To illustrate how Jesus' presence in the Eucharist differs from the first three, let me tell you about a conversation between two priests. The first priest was arguing that - since Vatican II - we now have to emphasize the presence of Jesus in the community. "Jesus," he said, "is not only present in the Eucharist, but in every person." The second priest said, "yes, we have to reverence each person, but can I ask a couple of question?"

The first priest nodded and the second priest asked, "Would you worship the Eucharist?" The first said, "Yes, of course."

The second priest then asked, "Would you worship me?"

Jesus is present in the priest - but I hope no one is foolish enough to worship me. And Jesus is truly present in community, but do not genuflect to each other. We do, however, worship Jesus in the Eucharist and when we approach a tabernacle, we do bend the knee. There is a difference between Jesus' presence in other human beings and his presence in the Eucharist. In the Mass - the Holy Spirit transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The bread and wine become Jesus. For that reason we worship the Blessed Sacrament.

From earliest times Christians have recognized Jesus' real, substantial presence in the Eucharist. Perhaps you have heard about St. Tarcisius. A twelve-year-old boy, he was an altar server. Being a time of persecution, they could not celebrate Mass openly as we do, so they went underground - in the Catacombs of Rome. After Mass, they chose Tarcisius to take Communion to someone who could not attend. The priest placed the

consecrated Host in a special container, that Tarcisius held under his robe, near his heart.

On the way some boys were playing ball. Needing an extra player, they called Tarcisius to join them. When he said he could not, they asked him what he was holding. The priest had told Tarcisius that could not show the "Sacred Mysteries" to unbelievers. The boys gathered around him and began to taunt him. As he held the Host tightly, the boys became furious, hitting and kicking Tarcisius. Eventually a man came who shouted and chased the boys away.

Tarcisius was beaten so badly the man had to pick him up. He died on the way and was buried in the Cemetery of St. Callixtus.

Why do I have to go to Mass? The answer is simple: To worship and to receive Jesus - as Lord and Savior.

Remember your purpose in this life. Not to earn a million dollars or to make a name for yourself. Those things are fine, but they will vanish like smoke.

Your purpose and mine is this - to know, love and serve God in this life and to be happy with him forever in heaven.

That means worship. Here on earth the object of our worship is the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus himself.

**"All we really need in our convent is the Tabernacle."**

The former archbishop of San Francisco, John Quinn, loved to tell the story of the arrival of Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity to open their house in the city. Poor Archbishop Quinn had gone to great efforts to make sure that their convent was, while hardly opulent, quite comfortable. He recalls how Mother Teresa arrived and immediately ordered the carpets removed, the telephones, except for one, pulled out of the wall, the beds, except for the mattresses taken away, and on and on.

Explained Mother Teresa to the baffled archbishop, "All we really need in our convent is the tabernacle" [Msgr. Timothy M. Dolan in *Priests of the Third Millennium* (2000), p. 218.]. Fr. Tony (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>)