

Convent 2016

The Mystical Supper:

At the Mystical Supper in the Upper Room Jesus gave a dramatically new meaning to the food and drink of the sacred meal. He identified Himself with the bread and wine: “Take, eat; this is my Body. Drink of it all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant” (Matthew 26:26-28). Food had always sustained the earthly existence of everyone, but in the Eucharist the Lord gave us a distinctively unique human food - bread and wine - that by the power of the Holy Spirit, has become our gift of life.

Consecrated and sanctified, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. This change is not physical, but mystical and sacramental. While the qualities of the bread and wine remain, we partake of the true Body and Blood of Christ. In the eucharistic meal God enters into such a communion of life, that He feeds humanity with His own being, while still remaining distinct. In the words of St. Maximos the Confessor, Christ, “transmits to us divine life, making Himself eatable.” The Author of life shatters the limitations of our createdness . Christ acts so that “we might become sharers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).

From the moment Christ instituted this Mystery, the Eucharist has become the centre of the Church’s life, and her most profound prayer. The Eucharist is both the source and the summit of our life in Christ. It is in the Eucharist that the Church is changed from a mere human community, into the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and the People of God. The Eucharist is the pre-eminent sacrament, as it completes all the others and recapitulates

the entire economy of salvation. Through the Eucharist our new life in Christ is renewed and increased. The Eucharist imparts life, and the life it gives is the life of God.

The Church is that place where heaven and earth are united, and where we can live as we were meant to be, as we were before the Fall. The Eucharist is that place where the disunity that came with the Fall is put aside, and our communion with God is restored. Our participation in the Eucharist is the moment when we are restored to the Garden of Eden, and God and humankind walk together again. The Eucharist unites us to the Heavenly Banquet which is taking place before the Throne of God.

The Eucharist transcends time, and space, uniting believers in the worship of the Kingdom of God, along with all the heavenly hosts, the saints, and the angels. To this end, everything in the Liturgy is seen as symbolic, yet also not just merely symbolic, but making the unseen reality manifest in our midst, the past and the future a present reality, and we are placed on the path to restoration and wholeness, healed by the self-emptying love of Christ, and our communion with God is restored.