

# *This is My Body*

*The Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist*

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# 2019 Pew Research Poll

## Most weekly Mass-goers believe in transubstantiation; most other Catholics do not

% of U.S. Catholics who ...

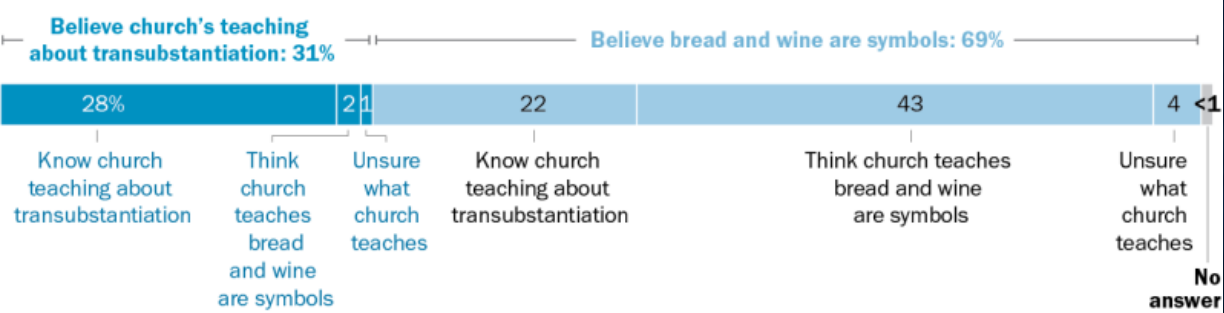
	NET Believe bread and wine become body, blood of Christ	Know church teaching on transubstantiation	Don't know teaching/ unsure about teaching	NET Believe bread and wine are symbols	Know church teaching on transubstantiation	Don't know teaching/ unsure about teaching
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Attend Mass weekly or more	63	58	5	37	14	23
Monthly/yearly	25	23	1	75	25	50
Seldom/never	13	10	2	87	25	62
Men	32	30	3	67	24	44
Women	29	27	3	70	20	50
White	34	32	2	65	25	40
Hispanic	24	21	4	76	19	57
Under age 40	26	23	3	74	27	47
40-59	27	26	2	72	22	50
60 or older	38	35	3	61	18	43
High school or less	26	22	3	74	15	59
Some college	31	27	4	69	19	50
College graduate	37	36	1	62	33	30

Note: Those who declined to answer not shown. Whites include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics can be of any race.  
Source: Survey conducted Feb. 4-19, 2019, among U.S. adults.

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## Seven-in-ten U.S. Catholics believe bread, wine used in Communion are symbolic

% of U.S. Catholics who ...



Note: Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding.  
Source: Survey conducted Feb. 4-19, 2019, among U.S. adults.

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# “A spiritual disaster”

- “the Eucharistic sacrifice, ... is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life” (*Lumen Gentium* 11)
- “The other sacraments, as well as with every ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate, are tied together with the Eucharist and are directed toward it. The Most Blessed Eucharist contains the entire spiritual boon of the Church, that is, Christ himself.” (Paul VI, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 5)

# As Flannery O' Connor said:

- “Well, if it’s just a symbol, to hell with it!”





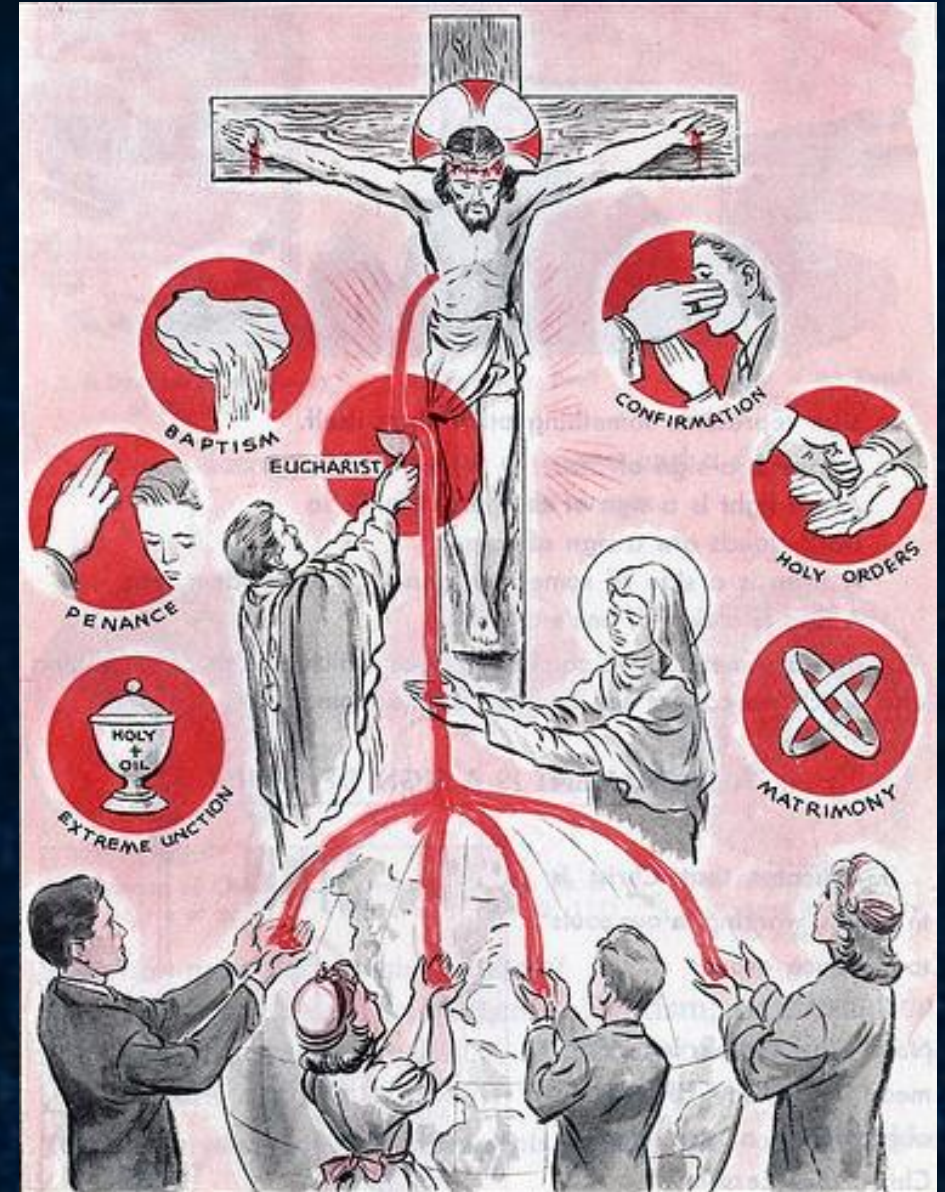
# What's wrong with symbols?

- Nothing!
- “As a being at once body and spirit, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols ... Inasmuch as they are creatures, these perceptible realities can become means of expressing the action of God who sanctifies men, and the action of men who offer worship to God.” (CCC 1146-1148)
- The problem is thinking that the Eucharist is *just* a symbol.
- It is **not** either a symbol or the Body and Blood of Jesus
- It is **both** a symbol and truly the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus



# The sacraments are signs

- “A sacrament is an outward *sign* instituted by Christ to give grace.” (Baltimore Catechism)
- “The sacraments are efficacious *signs* of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us.” (CCC 1131)





# The Eucharist as symbol

- Bread
  - Basic nutritional sustenance
  - Many grains of wheat, one loaf – the Church
- Wine
  - Alcoholic joy and sweetness – happiness and sweetness of Lord's spirit in us
  - Many grapes, one bottle of wine – one wineskin, the Church



# Presence

- Comes from the Latin *praeesse*
  - Prae (before) + esse(to be)
  - To be before (someone or something)



# Presence

- “Christ Jesus ... is present in many ways to his Church:
  - In his word
  - In his Church’s prayer
  - “Where two or three are gathered in [his] name”
  - In the poor, the sick, and the imprisoned
  - In the sacraments of which he is the author
  - In the sacrifice of the Mass
  - In the person of the minister
  - But “he is present ... most especially in the Eucharistic species” (CCC 1373)

# What makes Jesus's Eucharistic Presence "Real?"

- "[In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist] the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained." (Council of Trent)
- "This presence is called 'real' – by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be 'real' too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a substantial presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present." Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*



# Substance and Accidents

- Substance – what a thing is
- Accidents – properties of a thing that have no part in the substance of a thing
- E.g. Thomas can:
  - Change shape (get taller, gain weight)
  - Change color (get tan)
  - Gain a new relationship (become a father)without changing what he is (a human being).



# Transformation

- Transformation – normal substance change
  - One substance is transformed into another, and the accidents pass away
  - E.g. A cow eats grass. The grass is transformed from grass into cow flesh. The accidents of grass (color, texture, etc.) cease to exist
- This is not the case for the Eucharist
  - We can clearly sense the accidents of bread and wine before us





# Transubstantiation

- Transubstantiation – the name the Church gives for the conversion of the substance of Bread and Wine to the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ





# Hylomorphic theory

- Substances are a compound of form and matter
  - Form – structure which gives things their essential characteristics or attributes
  - Matter – "stuff" out of which all (physical) things are made
  - E.g. Form of a human being configures matter (carbon, water molecules, etc.) into a human being





# Transubstantiation vs. Transformation

- In transformation, form changes, matter remains
  - E.g. Form of grass to form cow flesh, but matter remains (various molecules that made up grass)
- In transubstantiation, **whole substance** (form/matter composite) changes from bread and wine to body and blood of Christ
  - Accidents remain
  - Accidents normally are caused by substance, but those substances are secondary causes
  - God is primary cause
  - Therefore, God can hold accidents of bread and wine in existence without secondary cause of substance of bread and wine

# When God speaks, it is

- Creation
  - “God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.” (Genesis 1:3)





# When God speaks, it is

- Jesus's (the Word made flesh) miracles
  - “Jesus said to him, ‘**Rise, take up your pallet, and walk.**’ And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked.” (John 5:8-9)
  - “Taking her by the hand he said to her, ‘**Talitha cumi**’; which means, ‘**Little girl, I say to you, arise.**’ And immediately the girl got up and walked.” (Mark 5:41-42)
  - “But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘**Be silent, and come out of him!**’ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.” (Mark 1:25-26)





# When God speaks, it is

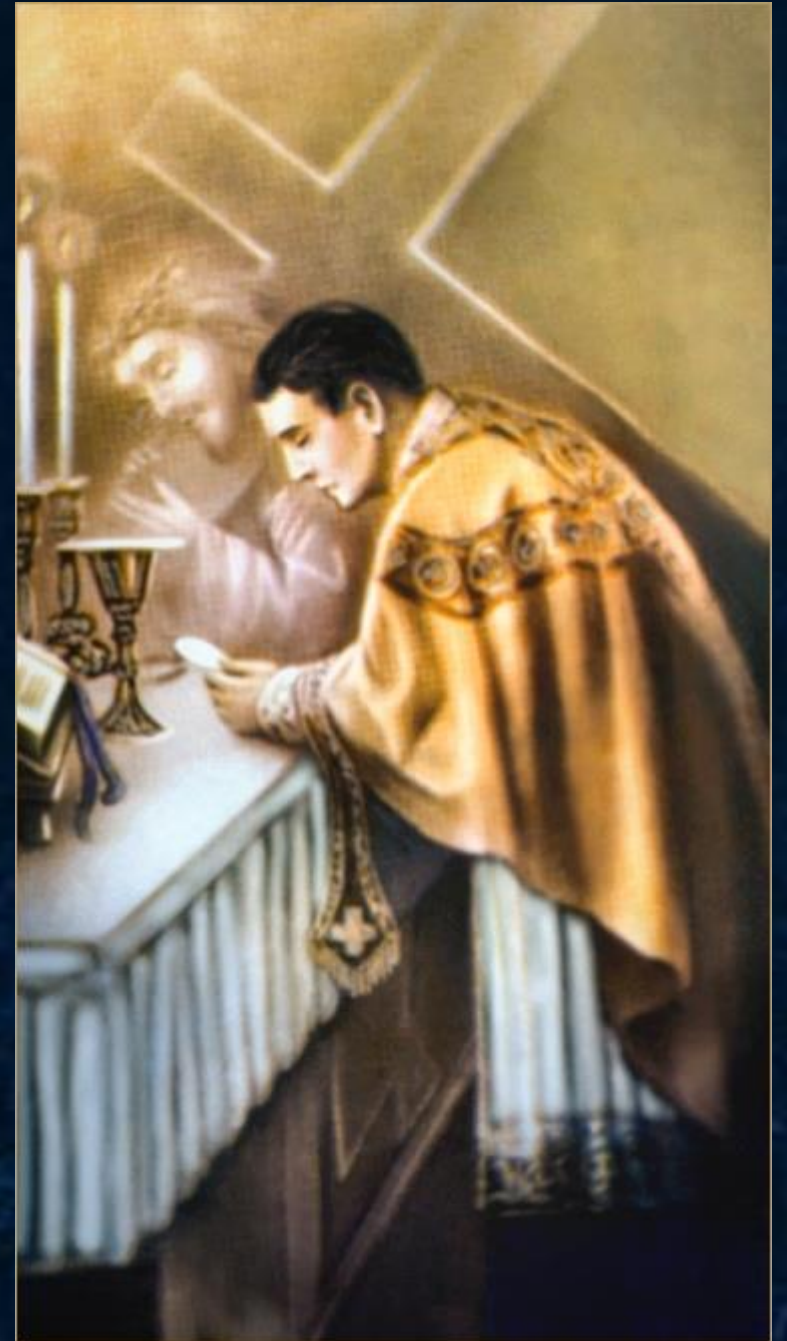
- The institution of the Eucharist
  - “Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ And he took a chalice, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” (Matthew 26:26-28)





# God still speaks

- “Christians come together in one place for the Eucharistic assembly. At its head is Christ himself, the principal agent of the Eucharist. He is high priest of the New Covenant; it is he himself who presides invisibly over every Eucharistic celebration. It is in representing him that the bishop or priest acting *in the person of Christ the head (in persona Christi capitis)* ... says the Eucharistic Prayer.” (CCC 1348)





# The importance of faith

- “The presence of Christ's true body and blood in this sacrament cannot be detected by sense, nor understanding, but by faith alone, which rests upon Divine authority. Hence, on Luke 22:19: ‘This is My body which shall be delivered up for you,’ Cyril says: ‘Doubt not whether this be true; but take rather the Savior's words with faith; for since He is the Truth, He lieth not.’” (Summa Theologiae III, Q75, A1)





# The importance of faith

- "Let us submit to God in all things and not contradict Him, even if what He says seems to contradict our reason and intellect; let His word prevail over our reason and intellect. Let us act in this way with regard to the Eucharistic mysteries, and not limit our attention just to what can be perceived by the senses, but instead hold fast to His words. For His word cannot deceive."  
(St. John Chrysostom)





# What does this demand of us?

- “If I could believe that Jesus is present in the Eucharist, I would crawl over broken glass if necessary to be with him.” – words of a minister from another Christian church to a friend of Bishop Gerard J Holohan, Diocese of Bunbury





On a personal note



# Exodus 90 Holy Hour Guide

- 5 minutes – Opening Prayer
- 15 minutes – Spiritual Reading
- 20 minutes – Silent Prayer
- 15 minutes – Intercessions
- 5 minutes – Thanksgiving
- Close by asking intercession of Mary and the saints



# St. John Vianney

- “I look at Him and He looks at me.”
- Time to focus exclusively on Jesus present before us and allow him to look back on us with love

# Additional Resources

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1322-1419, 1548-1551)
- *Mysterium Fidei*, Encyclical of Pope Paul VI
- National Eucharistic Revival website,  
<https://www.eucharisticrevival.org/>
- William Newton - Aristotle and the Eucharist: A Match Made in Heaven
  - [https://www.academia.edu/11070216/Aristotle\\_and\\_the\\_Eucharist\\_A\\_Match\\_Made\\_in\\_Heaven](https://www.academia.edu/11070216/Aristotle_and_the_Eucharist_A_Match_Made_in_Heaven)