

CALLED TO BE EUCHARIST

Thomas Aquinas: "Material food first of all turns itself into the person who eats it, and as a consequence, restores his losses and increases his vital energies. Spiritual food, on the other hand, turns the person who eats it into Itself, and thus the proper effect of this sacrament is the conversion of man into Christ, so that he may no longer live for himself, but that Christ may live in Him. And as a consequence it has the double effect of restoring the spiritual losses caused by sins and defects and of increasing the power of the virtues".

St. Augustine, Sermon 272: "If you, therefore, are Christ's body and members, it is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord's table! It is your own mystery that you are receiving! You are saying "Amen" to what you are: your response is a personal signature, affirming your faith. When you hear "The body of Christ", you reply "Amen." Be a member of Christ's body, then, so that your "Amen" may ring true! But what role does the bread play? We have no theory of our own to propose here; listen, instead, to what Paul says about this sacrament: "The bread is one, and we, though many, are one body." [1 Cor. 10.17] Understand and rejoice: unity, truth, faithfulness, love. "One bread," he says. What is this one bread? Is it not the "one body," formed from many? Remember: bread doesn't come from a single grain, but from many. When you received exorcism, you were "ground." When you were baptized, you were "leavened." When you received the fire of the Holy Spirit, you were "baked." Be what you see; receive what you are. This is what Paul is saying about the bread."

St. Augustine, in the account of his conversion, the Confession: "I am the food of grown men. Grow, and you shall feed upon me. You will not change me into yourself, as you change food into your flesh, but you will be changed into me!"

St. Irenaeus in the third century, said: 'When we drink the cup at the Eucharist, in which wine has become Christ's blood, his blood mixes with our blood, and they become one. Equally when we eat the bread, which has become the body of Christ, his body mixes with our body, and they become one.'

From Pope Benedict XVI in his Exhortation SACRAMENTUM CARITATIS, Paragraph 88 "...Our communities, when they celebrate the Eucharist, must become ever more conscious that the sacrifice of Christ is for all, and that the Eucharist thus compels all who believe in him to become "bread that is broken" for others, and to work for the building of a more just and fraternal world. Keeping in mind the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, we need to realize that Christ continues today to exhort his disciples to become personally engaged: "You yourselves, give them something to eat" (Mt 14:16). Each of us is truly called, together with Jesus, to be bread broken for the life of the world.

Bishop Robert Barron, Letter to a Suffering Church, pp 73-74 When we consume the Eucharist, we are taking the whole Christ – body, blood soul, and divinity – into ourselves, becoming thereby conformed to him in the most literal sense. Through this great sacrament, we are Christified, eternalized, deified, made ready for life on high with God."