

Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery

Eucharisticum Mysterium, May 25, 1967

1. Recent Documents of the Church Concerning the Mystery of the Eucharist

The mystery of the Eucharist is the true center of the sacred liturgy and indeed of the whole Christian life. Consequently the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, continually seeks to understand and to live the Eucharist more fully.

In our own day the Second Vatican Council has stressed several important aspects of this mystery.

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9. The Different Modes of Christ's Presence

In order that they should achieve a deeper understanding of the mystery of the Eucharist, the faithful should be instructed in the principal ways in which the Lord is present to His Church in liturgical celebrations.⁴³

He is always present in a body of the faithful gathered in His name (cf. Matt. 18:20). He is present too in His Word, for it is He who speaks when the Scriptures are read in the Church.

In the sacrifice of the Eucharist He is present both in the person of the minister, “the same now offering through the ministry of the priest who formerly offered himself on the Cross,”⁴⁴ and above all under the species of the Eucharist.⁴⁵ For in this sacrament Christ is present in a unique way, whole and entire, God and man, substantially and permanently. This presence of Christ under the species “is called ‘real’ not in an exclusive sense, as if the other kinds of presence were not real, but ‘*par excellence*’.”⁴⁶

⁴³ Cf. Vatican II Constitution on Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7—AAS 56 (1964), pp. 100-101.

⁴⁴ Council of Trent, Session XXII, Decree on the Mass, Chap. II—Denzinger 940 (1743).

⁴⁵ Cf. Vatican II Constitution on Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7—AAS 56 (1964), pp. 100-101

⁴⁶ Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Fidei*—AAS 57 (1965), p. 764